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THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY THE LATE

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PREFACE

THE following work was sent to the Press on Monday, July 13, 1908. On the evening of that day Dr. Bigg was seized by the illness of which he died, without any full return of consciousness, on July 15. A few days before he had told the Secretary to the Delegates that, though he might polish up his work to some extent as it passed through the Press, the book was as he meant it to stand. The work of the editor has therefore been narrowly limited. I have verified the references, and have added a few where it appeared that clearness required them: but I have altered nothing except in the very few passages where the reference given seemed to me to be manifestly wrong. I do not know what changes Dr. Bigg himself might have introduced, but it has seemed right to leave the book as nearly as possible as it was when he sent it to the Press.

It may be well, however, to say something of the nature of the book, and the place it proposes to fill. It is a summary account of the history and thought of the Church up to the point at which the persecuting edicts were withdrawn for the last time. Obviously, a period so long as this and beset with so many controversies would justify and, indeed, would seem to many to require more extended treatment than it has received here. There are controversies as to the literature, its date and interpretation: an author

might well determine and be expected to enter into all these, to weigh and appraise the work of other scholars upon the subject, to give something like a history of the various discussions, as well as lists of the books concerned. Such a work would then take its place in what we may venture to call the professional discussion of the subject: large parts of it would probably appeal only to the professional student, and the author would find his reward in the appreciation of his comrades in his line of study; perhaps also, in some degree, in the joy of battle, of assault and defence. Such a book might also be popular; its intrinsic character or the interests involved in it might catch the popular attention; but this is not very likely, nor is it any part of the purpose of the author. He writes for those who will understand, who know the intricacies of his subject, and who prefer no conclusion to a false or feeble one. Dr. Bigg has not had this ideal of authorship in view; he has not written primarily for the comparatively small group of scientific students, but for a wider circle, neither purely professional nor merely popular.

It cannot be denied that the severest type of historical study and writing has certain disadvantages. Though its results are necessary to the final presentation of historical fact, it makes advance in part by means of the gradual correction of errors. There is a central traditional line of belief as to the past: on either side of it controversies arise, most frequently over details of more or less importance. It is comparatively rare that the main lines of the historical tradition are assaulted; still more rare that they are

assaulted successfully. At the present time, for instance, both the most conservative and the most revolutionary views of the origin and development of the Christian Church are alike impossible. The Tübingen school has had its victories, though it has not succeeded in establishing its most characteristic reconstructions of the past. On the other hand, the old view of the New Testament, of church organization, even of the history of doctrine has suffered serious change. What has survived is the central traditional view of things, modified sometimes slightly, sometimes more seriously, by discoveries and special researches, but not fundamentally disturbed. There was a disproportion in the more revolutionary view—due partly to false assumptions, partly to true principles misused, partly perhaps to the enthusiasm for novelty and special learning—which the general sense of the Church gradually corrects. The general body of Christians, especially in England, is of this mind. It is impatient—more impatient than it should be—of special studies and of the theories to which they give rise; but it is not rigidly conservative, nor instantaneously hostile to all modifications of traditional views.

It is to this type of mind that Dr. Bigg specially appeals. He has not attempted to set out the whole position in detail or to define his relations to other writers upon the same theme. He has not given exhaustive references, but he has put down the results of many years of reading, and described the impression which his own independent study of the ancient writers has left upon his mind. He has not ignored

modern developments, but his authorities are for the most part ancient rather than modern. Moreover, it is specially noticeable that he has given particular attention to pagan writers, and has a peculiar interest in those thinkers who tried to find points in pagan philosophy which had affinity with the new religion. This is the secret of his attraction to the great Alexandrines. There will be points as to which many readers will be unable to follow him; there will be others as to which many would wish for a more complete discussion. The last must be sought elsewhere. In the present work there is simply a presentation of the main lines of the Church History of the early days, as it appeared to a learned and devout scholar, who with all his interest in the precursors of Christianity had grasped the fundamental importance to the Church and to mankind of the teaching of the Cross.

T. B. S.

Oxford,
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CHAPTER I

THE EMPIRE

Christ was born under Augustus, crucified under Tiberius. Hence some of the apologists made it one of their pleas for toleration that the Church was coeval with the Empire. They meant that the coincidence of time was designed by God, that these two great institutions were intended to help one another, and ought not to be hostile.

There was substantial truth in this opinion. There can be no doubt that the establishment of the Empire greatly assisted the diffusion of the new religion.

Let us consider first its extent. The Roman Empire covered the whole basin of the Mediterranean Sea, which was the great mixing-bowl of ideas, the cradle of modern civilization. It included not only the whole of the shores of the great sea, but England, Spain, France, all Europe as far northwards as the Rhine and Danube, Asia as far eastwards as Armenia and the Euphrates, Egypt, and a broad strip of North Africa. It covered nearly all the states and countries of modern Europe except Scotland, Ireland, the North German Empire, and Scandinavia. But it embraced great part of Austria, and even in Russia it possessed the north coast of the Black Sea. Of the ancient seats of wisdom, Egypt, Greece, and Palestine were now all Roman, and whatever was durable in the thoughts of Babylon and Persia had found its way into the West through these lands. A glance at the map will show the commanding position of Italy, where lay Rome, the capital of the world.

Within these vast dominions there was a broad unity, which we may consider under five heads.

1. There was one supreme head, the Caesar, for we need hardly pause here to consider the limited, varying, and evanescent authority of the Senate.

2. There was free communication by land and by sea. By land at all times, especially along the great imperial roads, which were as perfect as the engineer could make them. Subordinate cross-country roads were much inferior, but abundant in every direction. By sea only in the summer half of the year. Travelling was far more common, quicker, easier, and safer, though there were pirates on the water and robbers on the land, than it had ever been before.

3. Trade was vastly more active and extensive. Chinese silk was brought by caravans overland. Roman envoys or adventurers appeared in China in the second, and again in the third century. Frankincense and other articles of luxury were imported from Arabia, pepper and spices from Bharoch (Broach) at the mouth of the Nerbudda and from Malabar, and there was regular commercial intercourse with Ceylon.[1] Within the vast limits of the Empire there was unrestrained freedom of exchange. Commodities of all kinds, including ideas, circulated freely everywhere, as far as was possible before the invention of the mariner's compass and of the steam-engine.

4. Within the Empire the endless wars between rival tribes, cities, kingdoms had been brought to an end, and the *Pax Romana* was seldom broken except by frontier disturbances or by occasional civil broils. The greater part of the Empire enjoyed a condition of almost unruffled repose.

5. Again, a system of public schools spread rapidly over the Empire, encouraged by State and municipal aid. Education was brought within easy reach of every one who had time and inclination. It was indeed purely literary, and aimed too exclusively at oratorical display; but it was well adapted for the cultivation of taste and for the diffusion of general ideas, and it was highly successful in imparting a rapid tincture of civilization even to the most backward of the provinces.

On the other hand there were great disparities. We may compare the Empire not unaptly to British India, both in its system of administration and in the wide social and national heterogeneity of the subject races. The main dif-

[1] See Mommsen, *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, ii. p. 301.

ference between the two is that native principalities were regarded by the Romans with great dislike, and quickly disappeared. After this the excellent Roman code prevailed over the whole Empire, though much respect was shown to the customs and even the laws of the ancient city districts and cantons, and a certain restricted authority was left to what we may loosely call the parliaments of the several provinces. But the higher criminal jurisdiction, and in especial the power of inflicting capital punishment, belonged exclusively to the Roman judges.

The population was divided by wide variations in race, civilization, language, social condition, and religion.

As to race, we find the Greek, the Roman, the Semite, the Copt, the Celt, the German, the Basque, the Moor, and many peoples of less note.

Civilization was higher in the East than in the West, in the towns than in the country, and on the coast than in the upland regions. It may be measured by the dissemination in the East of Greek, and in a lower degree of Syriac, and in the West of Latin. In the East Greek was universally or largely spoken in all those regions which had once acknowledged the sway of Alexander, though Syriac survived. Coptic was strong in Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries, and even Celtic was for long in use in the Galatian district. In the West Latin made its way with very different rates of speed. Spain was Romanized at a very early date, though even here Basque held its ground. Gaul, outside of the old province, retained its Celtic idiom for centuries, indeed the old language did not wholly disappear till the age of Charlemagne. The Britons retained their native tongue, which is still spoken in Wales. In Africa Punic survived down to the time of the Vandal conquest. The existence of Roumansch dialects along the line of the Danube, in parts of Switzerland, in Wallachia, Moldavia and parts of Hungary, Transylvania and Bessarabia, and south of the great river in parts of old Thrace, Macedonia, and even Thessaly, shows how firmly Latin was rooted in these districts before the invasion of the Slavs. But in country districts savagery was not easily extirpated. Even in the time of Juvenal the people

of Ombi, in Egypt, were capable of cannibalism. In the time of Tertullian people still sacrificed children to the African Moloch. In Gaul Druidism lingered till the reign of Diocletian. In Asia Minor the Isaurians were infamous for brigandage and piracy at all times, and even in Italy the slaves by whom the *latifundia* were tilled or shepherded were wild and lawless.

As to social condition, the differences of wealth were enormous. The great Roman nobles were as wealthy as our English dukes, official salaries were as large as they are in our own country or colonies now, and professional incomes were in favourable cases very high. Some tradesmen were very wealthy; but about £1,000 was the ordinary property qualification of a decurion, or member of a town council, and the bulk of the population was very poor. In Rome itself the greater part of the inhabitants lived upon the alms of the State, and the bulk of the people all over the empire were slaves, who though not absolutely forbidden to accumulate money, were yet in general without anything that they could call their own.

But by far the most important inequalities under this head were those of legal status. The difference between citizen and non-citizen was of great weight in the time of St. Paul, and even in the time of Trajan, but towards the middle of the second century it was superseded in fact by a new classification of the free subjects of the Empire into *honestiores* and *tenuiores*, which we shall find already recognized in practice by Marcus Aurelius. When Caracalla, in 212, bestowed the franchise upon the whole of the free population of the Empire, the result of this apparently generous concession was not the elevation of the mass of the provincials, but the degradation of the mass of the citizens to a position little above that of the slave; the poorer citizens were rendered liable to hitherto unknown oppressions and stripped of all their ancient rights, especially of the most valuable of all, the right of appeal.

The new classification was essentially determined by property, though it also rested partly upon free birth and partly upon respectability. The *honestiores* embraced all

the upper and upper-middle classes down to and including the decurions. They stepped into the privileges of the citizen, and were exempt from the worst and most degrading forms of punishment. Where a *tenuior* was burnt alive or crucified, the *honestior* was beheaded or merely banished, and in general was not liable to torture or scourging, at any rate not to the extreme forms of those inflictions. The *tenuiores* were freedmen, and even freemen who earned their living by the smaller trades and such employments as were considered disreputable. The great majority of the free world, and in particular of Christians, probably belonged to this category. Beneath these again came all slaves. The condition of the slaves was in some striking points much superior to that of the negroes in the American plantations before the Civil War. They were almost without exception white men, and there was therefore none of that racial contempt and disgust which is often felt for the black. No attempt was made to interfere with their education or their religion. Emancipation was easy, and in towns at any rate rapid. Freedmen could and often did attain to great wealth and high position. At least two even of the Emperors, Pertinax and the great Diocletian, were of servile descent. Yet the slave was a mere chattel without rights. He could not even marry; down to the time of Hadrian his master could put him to death for any cause, or for no cause at all. Again, the white skin, which formed in one respect an advantage, was in another a cruel misfortune. No slave girl or boy who took the master's fancy could have any virtue at all. Here again it must be noticed that quite half of the Christians must have been slaves.

Religion was in the ancient world one of the chief causes of division; it strengthened and intensified all the others. Every race had its own creed, every creed with the exception of the Jewish was polytheistic, and none of the polytheisms had more than a very limited connexion with the principles of moral virtue.

Two remarks may be made. The higher and broader forms of heathen morality reposed not upon religion but upon intelligence. The philosophers, especially the Platonic and

Stoic, had much to say that was very true of the relation between man, the God who gave him being, and the world in which his lot is cast. But, the better their thought, the more apparent became the grave contradiction between their new ideas of goodness and the savage or childish superstitions which form the basis of their cults. Marcus Aurelius was in many ways an admirable moralist, but his morality cannot be reconciled with the paganism which he not only professed but believed. The most urgent problem of the age was to discover a new religion capable of healing the strife between faith and reason. Many attempts were made to solve the problem. To some Mithra, to others Isis, to others the Greek mysteries seemed to hold the key; but all failed, because all rested ultimately upon a belief which rested upon nothing.

Again, the ancient polytheisms were all killed at the root. In their origin the old gods had all been gods of war, champions of the tribes that worshipped them, doughty protectors against the encroachments of other hostile tribes and other hostile gods. But the gods of Rome had brought them all low, and the gods of Rome had in turn been discredited by the civil wars which had rudely shaken the belief in their power or their goodwill. Under the Empire it became evident that men were intended to be not enemies but brothers and fellow citizens. Hence again a new religion was wanted which should explain, and enforce by divine sanction, the new reign of universal peace. This was to be the office of Caesar-worship, to which we must recur a little later on. But such a device could not work; its necessary effects were still further to depress the gods, and still further to widen the breach between religion and morality.

The polytheisms of the Empire had a long unrecorded history behind them, and the process by which they had taken shape can only be guessed. Something like it may still be seen at work in British India, where the rude chaotic beliefs of the hill tribes—including fetishism, beast-worship, ancestor-worship, nature-worship—exist side by side with the elaborate polytheism of the Aryan Brahmins, which, while carefully preserving the most barbaric superstitions,

has managed by an insane logic to bring them into a kind of coherence and give them an air of plausibility.[1] What may have been the state of things in neglected corners and among the lower classes of the Roman Empire we hardly know, though there is plenty of proof that witchcraft and magic, in their most degraded forms, were quite common even amongst educated people. But generally speaking, the literary races had attained to the same level as Brahminism, and reached the point where polytheism begins to pass into Pantheism. Pantheism, it may be observed in passing, is the natural consummation of Paganism. First of all the many systems, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and others, are blended into one, mainly by omitting the features in which they differ without introducing any new and better conception. Thus we obtain the Neo-paganism of the second century, or what we may call Undenominational Paganism. Then the many unlovely and unloving gods, by another omission of differences, are reduced to one deity, who is All, but is still unlovely and unloving of necessity, because what did not exist in the multitude cannot be found in the individual.

The three systems which concern us most are those of Rome,[2] of Greece, and of Egypt. Of these the first was the most moral, while the last was the most religious.

The old gods of Rome were Janus and Jana, the deities who presided over all beginnings and seem to have been regarded as first of all the heavenly beings; Jupiter and Juno, the reigning king and queen; Saturnus and Ops, the givers of rustic plenty; Vesta, the guardian of the domestic fire; Mars, god of the spring-time; Minerva, Sol, Luna, and

[1] Two interesting books may be consulted with great advantage: the *Annals of Rural Bengal*, by Sir W. W. Hunter, and *Asiatic Studies*, by Sir A. C. Lyall.

[2] In this account of Roman Religion I have leaned principally upon Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. iii. Mr. Warde Fowler, in his excellent *Roman Festivals*, warns us that 'the study of the oldest Roman Religion is still one of insuperable difficulty'. He gives his readers plentiful references to ancient documents and to modern literature upon the subject. What I have written in the text is to be taken only as an impressionist sketch from the religious point of view. As such I trust it may be found generally correct.

others. Many of them were worthy married couples; for long they had no statues, and no ugly tales were told about them. Rome had no mythology; her legends were all human, strenuous, and moral, recounting the virtue of Lucretia, the self-sacrifice of Curtius, the courage of Horatius Cocles, the fidelity of Regulus. The gods were simple beneficent powers who divided amongst them the business of superintending the earthly fortunes of their Roman children. For this purpose they were assisted by numerous subordinates. Thus Flora looked after the farmer's meadows, Epona after his horses, his bees were the care of Mellona, his fruit of Pomona, his lambs of Pales, the boundary-stone that marked the limits of his little estate of Terminus. Every detail of work, every moment of life, was under the charge of some divinity who had nothing else to care for. Thus the child was guarded by Iterduca and Domiduca, who led him safely through the perils of the crowded streets, while his school lessons and his budding intelligence were watched over by Mens, Deus Catius Pater, Consus, Sentia, Volumnus, Stimula, Peta, and others. When these had discharged their task they handed him over to Juventas and Fortuna Barbata, whose office it was to protect the adolescent. They are more like fairies than gods, these kindly limited little elves, these patrons of the nursery, the school, and the plough. We know their names only from the *Indigitamenta*, or forms of invocation, preserved by dry archaeologists. They never attained to the dignity of a place in literature, and few of them were even honoured with a shrine. But they and other good spirits like them, especially the homely Lares and Penates, were the true divinities of the Roman people. Jupiter, Juno, and the great gods generally were worshipped by the State, but they were too busy and too far off. Little people wanted little deities who were not too proud to attend to the babies, or the oxen that drew the wagon, or the profits of the farm or of the shop. The worship of these field and household gods was the most popular and the most enduring, little as it had to do with the spiritual needs of men. It lasted on till the place of these godlets was occupied by the Christian saints.

In the later times of the Republic literary and fashionable people adopted the deities of Greece; but this movement never struck root in the West. Thoughtful men were shocked by the immorality of the myths, which proved indeed a fruitful cause of scepticism, and the general run of people in the Latin-speaking countries could not attach themselves to gods who, both in name and character, were quite unlike the familiar objects of their adoration.

Under the influence of Greek art the Greek gods had become transcendental men, distinct in feature and character rather than in office. While, in the eyes of a Roman, heaven is a strictly ordered State, whose every denizen has his own definite province, and never interferes in what does not concern him, Homer presents us with the vision of a celestial democracy, in which each is as good as his neighbour, and Apollo or Hera or Athena do not hesitate to balk one another, or even to intrigue against Zeus himself. The gods of Olympus were idealized Greeks, patrons and givers of all good things except virtue, in particular of art, music, and literature. Their theologians were poets and sculptors, and they were in all respects the counterpart of the handsome, quick-witted, and vicious race which had in fact created them. They had their pedigrees and family histories, which were set forth in savage legends of incest, seduction, adultery, and cannibalism. Some allegorized these fables, turning them into parables of nature. Thus the story of Zeus visiting Danae in the form of a shower of gold might be taken to signify the fertilizing rain falling from heaven upon the bosom of mother Earth. But some of these horrible legends are not capable of any explanation, and explain them as men might, the plain inference to be drawn from them is that the most vicious of Greeks was no worse than his own gods.

Besides the Olympian deities Greece possessed others of a different, and perhaps older, family—the black or gloomy or hard gods, Dionysus, Persephone, Demeter, Cybele, the Furies. With these names were connected the orgies or mysteries. The gods of Olympus loved all things bright and happy, but fled from the presence of woe; the hard or

Chthonian gods were judges who dealt out punishment for sin, sending repentance, remorse, despair, prescribing expiation and remedial suffering. It was they who chastised Orestes for the slaughter of his mother Clytemnestra, and banished even the god Apollo from heaven because he killed Python. Readers of the *Poetics* will remember how Aristotle advises people to get rid of pity or fear by a hearty cry over a good tragedy, and this was the general view of the Greeks. Expiation did not include moral amendment; it was simply a mode of deadening for a time the religious emotions. The sinner turned for a time into a frantic dervish, screaming, leaping, devouring raw flesh in gobbets, cutting himself with knives, like Attys and the Galli, or like the old priests of Baal. After this he felt quite well and comfortable till the fit returned. It was thus that the Greeks dealt with those feelings of spiritual unrest that under a wiser discipline would have led to permanent amendment of life. In a sense they were more religious than the Romans, who did not recognize repentance at all; and it must be allowed that the Greek mysteries taught dogmatically the happiness of the just in a future life, as we are informed by that very singular preacher, the comedian Aristophanes. But in the second century after Christ all spiritual discipline, all divine retribution, was ascribed by the more intelligent Greeks, such as Plutarch, not to the gods, but to the demons, who were beings of mixed nature, partly good and partly evil. Thus the kingdom of heaven was cut entirely adrift from repentance. At the same date the Mysteries became extremely popular, that is to say, men were becoming more conscious of the need of reconciliation with God through some kind of atonement. It is almost needless to point out what a gulf was opened here between the serene philosopher and people of broken and contrite heart, or how greatly the advance of Christianity was promoted by the obvious fact that, though the philosopher might have something to say to the healthy, he had no medicine whatever for the sick.

Egypt presents a different and much more perplexing spectacle. The ancients generally regarded the bestial

deities of the Nile with disgust and ridicule, and to us moderns the worship of the calf, the crocodile, the ibis, or the cat seems to be the lowest depth of superstition. Who but an utter savage, we ask, could thus turn a menagerie into a pantheon? Better by far the busy little fairies of Rome, or even the glorified profligates of Olympus. Yet in this paradoxical cult, which we can trace back upon the monuments for 3,000 years before Christ, Renouf[1] tells us that the sacred animals were always regarded as mere symbols of the gods to whom they belonged, and that the gods, on close inspection, seem to melt into one another and to merge finally in one sovereign divine personality, that of Ra the Sun. Behind Ra himself Renouf discovers a system of pure Pantheism, which is of great antiquity. The Egyptian religion inculcated a vivid, though barbaric, belief in a world beyond the grave, and an authoritative code of morality. Thus it appealed to every kind of mind, to the mere fetish worshipper, to the refined polytheist, and to the devout philosopher. It knew also how to make use of spiritual emotion. The tragic myth of Isis and Osiris told of the sufferings of a divine pair, of whom Isis is the compassionate mother of all who are in trouble, while Osiris is the merciful King and Judge of the dead. There are elements in this wild fable which reflect, though upon a much lower plane, the ideas of the Gospel. Inferior as it was to Christianity, Isis worship is yet vastly superior to the Hellenic mysteries, and it is not difficult to understand its fascination for Latins, and even for Greeks, in the first and second centuries. For a time Egyptian Isis and, for a still longer time, Persian Mithra, whose worship presented the same features in an even higher shape, bade fair to conquer the adoration of the whole of the civilized world.

We may divide the long line of Emperors into four series: (1) the Patrician Caesars, from Augustus to Vitellius; (2) the Bourgeois Caesars from Vespasian to Commodus; (3) the Caesars of the camp, from Pertinax to Diocletian; (4) the Christian Caesars, from Constantine onwards. In

[1] See the Hibbert Lectures for 1879 on *The Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt*, by P. Le Page Renouf.

each of these periods the Empire exhibits a different character, and the relation of the State to the Church varies accordingly. For a full description of the changes in government, law, and administration, in the condition of the people, in social and economical affairs the student should turn to the secular historians. We are considering the evolution of the Church, and, though world and Church are always inextricably intertwined, we must in the earlier periods confine ourselves to those points where the former comes into evident contact with the latter. At first the story of the Empire merely sheds light, often very insufficient light, upon the growth of Christianity. After the time of Constantine the relation of the two is inverted, and Christianity becomes the key which opens and explains the general course of affairs.

Let us begin with a sketch of those features of the new government which are for our purpose the most important.

We may regard the Empire as coming into existence at different dates—at the battle of Pharsalia (B. C. 48), in which Julius overthrew Pompey, or at the battle of Actium (B. C. 31), when Octavian destroyed Antony. But the fittest date of all is January 1, B. C. 27, when Octavian surrendered the irregular and extraordinary powers which he had wielded during the civil wars, and received in return the name of Augustus with new rights and privileges less alarming in appearance but more formidable in reality. Let us take the account engraved by his own command upon the monument of Ancyra: 'In my sixth and seventh consulates, after I had extinguished the civil wars, I gave back the Republic, which had been entrusted to me by universal consent of the citizens, into the rule of the Senate and Roman People. For this service I was called Augustus by a decree of the Senate, and the doorposts of my house were decked by public authority with laurels, and above them, over my door, was set a civic crown of oak leaves, in the name of the citizens whom I had saved, and a golden shield, testifying by its inscription to my valour, clemency, justice, and piety, was set up in the parliament house by the Senate and People of Rome, because although in dignity

I stood before all, yet I had no higher power than my colleagues.'

The Senate gave him the name of Augustus, an adjective specially appropriated to the gods. He called himself Princeps, which we may translate First or Chief of the Romans; it was an honourable appellation which had been used by courtesy of Pompey and Julius, as the most eminent personages in the free republic, and implied dignity and influence, but not power. Augustus professed to have restored the Republic, and to have accepted no office 'inconsistent with the usages of our forefathers', to be merely an honoured colleague of other magistrates. Simple-minded people might think that this was actually true, for all the machinery of the old free state went on, at first, just as it had done. But in fact, if not in name, the Princeps wielded powers which, though he was neither King nor Emperor in our sense of the words, made him absolute master—the power of the sword, the power of the purse, the power of life and death, and the power of legislation.

The attributes to which the Princeps attached most importance were two—the perpetual proconsulate, which made him supreme War-Lord, and the perpetual Tribunate of the Plebs. The latter made his person sacrosanct, and gave him an absolute and universal veto upon every act of the Senate or of the magistrates. But it was still more precious for its sentimental associations. For centuries the Tribune had been the champion of the oppressed in their long contest against the haughty and domineering patricians. He had raised the down-trodden plebeian to legal equality with his masters. The assumption of this title was nothing less than a solemn declaration in favour of the rights of man. Caesar meant to be the protector of the commons against the nobility, of the provincials against the harsh rule of their conquerors. This was in fact the moral foundation upon which the Empire rested; it professed to guarantee justice to all its members, and it carried out this profession; the provinces were much better governed than they had ever been before. For all these reasons this old republican office was so highly prized by

the Emperors that it was used as the royal measure of time. Instead of speaking of the years of their reign they spoke of the years of their tribunician power.

But for the Church historian the most remarkable title of the Emperor is that of Chief Pontiff. It marks the religious character which was strongly and deliberately impressed upon the Augustan settlement.

In the hideous turmoil of the civil war both religion and morality had suffered grievously. Many temples had fallen into ruin; many priesthoods had disappeared with the worships that they were intended to maintain. There was difficulty in filling up the vacant places among the Vestal Virgins. Even this, the most famous of the religious institutions of Rome, had fallen so low that the nobles were unwilling to offer their daughters for this onerous but highly respected service. Augustus determined to provide a remedy for all these disorders. The monument of Ancyra mentions ninety-six temples which he built or restored. The great priesthood of the Flamen Dialis, which had for many years been in abeyance, was re-established; the ancient colleges of the Salii and Arvales were strengthened by new endowments and dignities; the famous statue of Victory, round which in the fourth century paganism rallied for its last stand, was set up in the Curia, and each senator, as he took his place, cast incense on the fire that burned before it. Nor was the Emperor concerned merely for the formal ceremonies of public observance. He pressed the nobility to maintain their domestic chapels in comely order, and specially promoted the worship of the Lares, the most popular of all the deities of Italy, the little tutelary gods, who watched over the prosperity of the home, who knew and loved every member of the family, every bit of the furniture, who were simple and kindly, and allowed themselves to be beaten when things went wrong. Augustus was Pontifex Maximus, head of the Roman Church, sat upon all, or nearly all, of the priestly colleges, and took an active interest in their proceedings. What stress he laid upon his religious policy we may learn from Virgil and Horace. He had put an end to the civil wars with the

sword, and now he proposed to eradicate the sins which had caused these fratricidal dissensions by putting the gods again upon their thrones. His empire was the creation of the gods; it brought with it the divine gift of Peace, and it would endure so long as the Romans remembered that, though they were great, the gods were greater.

Was this all mere politic hypocrisy? Probably not. Augustus was, in his heathen way, a religious man. Anyhow it was surely a merit to perceive and acknowledge that justice and peace cannot endure without religion. But he was a very politic man, and felt quite sure that he was doing what the people wanted him to do. We must not exaggerate the infidelity of the last years of the Republic. Scientific people, philosophers, professors, and dissipated men of fashion told the world that they were atheists, and rather plumed themselves upon the fact. But the world did not take them seriously; it knew too much and speculated too little. It should be noticed that the reforms of Augustus, who was much less cosmopolitan than the brilliant Julius, aimed at the rehabilitation of the national deities of Rome, the 'gods of the fatherland and of the soil, and Romulus and mother Vesta' of whom Virgil sings. As Emperor he showed little favour to Egyptian or Oriental divinities. He was genuinely Roman, and exhibited all the prejudices of the Italian people.

But Augustus was not merely a religious reformer; he was himself a god. He deified his uncle Julius; he was himself deified after his death, as were nearly all his successors. Even in his lifetime he was worshipped, though only in a peculiar way. Temples were built and altars erected, at first in Asia Minor, but before long all over the Empire, to the Genius of Augustus, with which was generally combined the Genius of Rome. Both the name and the conception of the Genius are purely Latin, and there is considerable difference of opinion as to his nature and power. Some held that he was born and died with the man whom he protected, that he was in fact the heavenly double, or divine archetype, of the man. Some held that every human being has two genii, one good, the

other evil; some held there was but one, of changeable nature, 'black' or 'white' according to his humour. Some placed the Genius among the lower gods, some among the greatest of all, and this latter opinion was naturally the more probable. For, while the other gods were all charged with the care of the whole world, this private deity had nothing to do but to look after the interests of his one sheep. Some again identified the Genius with the Lares, and it is certain that the two worships were very closely allied. Other deities belonging to the same class were the Penates and the Manes. All these personal homely gods are vague and shadowy, because they belong to the earliest age of religion, to that far-off past before the dawn of history when each family was a state, complete in itself, with its own king, its own laws, its own worship.

The Genius was, if not the man himself, at any rate the man's own god, a notion which the Christian, though he would have found no great difficulty in the idea of a guardian angel, could not possibly accept. He could allow himself to swear by the Health of Augustus, but to take oath by, or in any way to acknowledge, the Fortune or the Genius of the Emperor he regarded as flat idolatry. But this was the most common form of oath, and this acknowledgement was pressed upon him at every turn. There were two remarkable occasions on which it was exceedingly difficult to escape. At every dinner-party, as soon as the first course was removed, and the toasts began, the statuettes of the Lares were brought in from the *Atrium* or hall of the house and placed upon the table, and libations were poured out to the deities of the family and to the Genius of Augustus, very much as we might drink to Church and State, and propose the health of the entertainer. The Christian was obliged therefore either to refuse all invitations from his heathen neighbours, to commit an overt act of disaffection which might cost him his life, or to do what his stricter brethren would regard as apostasy. Again, one of the most remarkable measures of the new government was to establish in all the provinces a sort of local parliament known as the *Commune*. On a stated day delegates from the cities assembled in the metro-

polis, business was transacted, and there was a great festival at which games, especially those of the arena, were celebrated. The president of these great gatherings was the High Priest of the province, and the special religious intention was the worship of the Genius of Caesar and of Rome. Once a year, therefore, when large multitudes were drawn together by local patriotism and by the desire for amusement, when the whole country-side was alive with excitement, the Christian was brought face to face with this cruel embarrassment. If he stayed away he was regarded not only as a kill-joy but as a bad citizen, if he attended how could he escape idolatry? Do what he would he could hardly avoid giving offence. If the mob caught sight of his long face, they might shout out his name. The lions were there all ready: criminals might perhaps be scarce, and Caesar's enemy had no friends. It was in this way that two of the worst massacres of the second century occurred, that of Smyrna in which Polycarp met his end, and that of Lyons.

Caesar-worship strikes us as so grotesque that we wonder if it was ever taken seriously. Devotional value it had little or none, and, if we turn to literature, we find hardly a trace of it, except in the poems of the courtly Horace, who owes his charm in great part to the fact that he was never serious about anything. Among the Greeks Pausanias[1] in the second century treats it as a mere fiction. Philostratus[2], in the beginning of the third, speaks of it as a thing of the past. Even Emperors made a jest of it. Seneca was allowed to publish his vulgar skit upon the apotheosis of Claudius. Vespasian, when he felt his end approaching, said, 'I think I am becoming a god,' and Hadrian, when it became apparent that Verus could not have a long life, complained that he had adopted a god and not a son, adding that he had lost a world of money by the mistake. Subjects could hardly be expected to take a more serious view than their masters. To a certain extent Caesar-worship harmonized with old-fashioned religious ideas that existed both in Greece and Rome. Founders of cities, legislators, men who had been in almost any way beneficent, or even remarkable, received

[1] viii. 2. 5; 9. 7. [2] *Vita Apollonii*, i. 15.

divine honours after death: people built chapels even to their own relations. Such local and family cults were extremely common. Augustus was regarded as the father and benefactor of the whole Empire, and in the ancient world the line which divided respect and gratitude from adoration was extremely fine. Caesar-worship was no doubt mainly formal and official. It had little meaning except as a solemn recognition of the unity of the State and the blessings accruing from the *pax Romana*. But it must be noticed that it was the only universal religion. Men worshipped Baal and Astarte in Syria, and Apollo or Jupiter in Greece and Rome, but all alike were called upon to adore the Genius of Caesar.

It was thus the chief rock in the way of the ship of the Church. Through this official religion dissent became also high treason.

Contempt of the national gods was no doubt an abomination in the eyes of all religious pagans. But in the West it had never been punished, and even in the East no atheist had been executed for centuries. There were plenty of people all over the Empire who had turned their backs upon the gods. Jupiter would probably have been left to protect himself, on the principle enunciated by Tacitus that *deorum iniuriae dis curae*, 'the gods can right their own wrongs.' But Caesar could and would avenge himself. 'If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend' was a threat that no magistrate could defy in an age when a man might lose his life for treating with disrespect even a coin that bore the Emperor's portrait.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

Christianity began in Galilee and Jerusalem, advanced to Antioch, where first it came into vital contact with the Gentile world, thence to Ephesus, the capital of Asia, thence to Thessalonica and Philippi, the chief cities of Macedonia, thence to Athens, the principal seat of Greek learning, and to Corinth, the chief emporium of Greek trade. The footsteps of St. Paul were evidently leading him towards Rome, and when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans he had pushed onwards as far as Illyria. But other labourers had forestalled him, and the seed of the Gospel had already been sown in the capital of the world.

No one can tell exactly how or when the Church of Rome came into existence. It was known already as a flourishing community when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. When he was brought to Italy as a prisoner he found 'the brethren' established also at Puteoli in the Bay of Naples. Puteoli may be regarded as one of the ports of Rome. Many ships from the East landed upon its wharves their cargoes and their passengers. There were Jews settled in Rome and in Puteoli, there were Roman Jews who worshipped in the Synagogue of the Libertines in Jerusalem, and there would be frequent communication between these allied communities. There was a constant stream of Gentile traffic also during those months when the sea was open. Officials, soldiers, merchants went to and fro. Eastern spices, silks, slaves, corn came pouring into Italy. By this road, or by way of Brundusium, or by the great land road round the head of the Adriatic, from Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Ephesus, or Corinth, or from all at once, the new faith made its way into the capital of the world. Among those persons to whom St. Paul sends greeting in the last chapter

of his Epistle, some had been previously known to him, some had not. Prisca (or Priscilla) and Aquila were his own spiritual children; Andronicus and Junia had been Christians longer than himself. Of the names given some are Hebrew, some Latin, most Greek, but names in the servile or enfranchised class to which these good people mainly belonged are no proof of nationality. Aquila seems to have been a merchant; we hear of him also at Corinth and Ephesus. He was probably wealthy, and after his conversion by St. Paul became an active patron of the Church. Both at Ephesus and at Rome a congregation assembled in the large hall of his abode. Two other house-churches may be indicated by the groups of names headed by Asyncritus and Philologus, and two others by those persons belonging to the great retinues of Aristobulus and Narcissus. Besides these five congregations there were probably others. We cannot say exactly how many house-churches there may have been, nor have we any means of telling how many individuals may have been included in each. But six years later that mere gleaning of the Church which perished in the persecution of Nero is called by Tacitus 'a great multitude', which, as it sufficed to furnish a grand hunting scene in the arena, and to light up a spacious circus, can hardly have included less than two or three hundred victims. If these formed a tenth part of the community, which would be a large proportion, we might guess that there were in Rome at the time at least two or three thousand Christian people.

Though these were probably in the main slaves or libertines, some at least must have been rich and educated. Any man whose house contained a hall large enough to be used as a place of meeting for worship must have been well-to-do. The name Philologus may denote a grammarian. It has been suggested, with some probability, that many of the persons addressed by the Apostle belonged to the vast household of Caesar. Narcissus may have been the celebrated freedman of the Emperor Claudius; Aristobulus was probably that grandson of Herod the Great who was educated and died in Rome. Many of their servants may have passed, as

often happened, by bequest into the imperial household. But in any case there were Christians in the retinue of the palace before St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians. Among the names given by St. Paul lie hidden those of the first founders and some of the first martyrs of the Church of Rome.

It is possible that a brief and obscure allusion made by Suetonius to tumults instigated by 'one Chrestus' among the Roman Jews in the reign of Claudius may point to dissensions caused by the first preaching of the Name of Christ in the synagogues of the capital. It is possible also that some of the first converts may have been persons of distinction. It has been supposed, not without reason, that Pomponia Graecina, wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Southern Britain, who was denounced to Nero as the adherent of 'a foreign superstition', was in fact a Christian. She was tried upon this charge, according to old Roman usage, by her husband, and by him acquitted, because he thought the charge unproved, or because he was resolved that his wife should believe what she chose. The incident occurred in 57, a year before the date usually assigned to the Epistle of St. Paul.

It is not clear whether in this Epistle St. Paul is dealing with questions that were actually in debate among the members of the Roman Church, or preparing the way for his intended visit by a full statement of his own belief and teaching. Either explanation will cover the facts. The Apostle appears to regard the community as one in which both Jews and Gentiles are living side by side, and labours to show that all men alike must seek for salvation in the free and sovereign grace of God bestowed upon the believer through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the light of this supreme axiom all precepts, ordinances, forms, all that can be called the machinery or outward garb of religion, if it does not vanish away, is relegated to the domain of the unessential, transitory, and expedient. St. Paul mentions no body of commissioned clergy as existing in Rome. We cannot tell whether the Church in that city was not as yet organized in the usual way, or whether the Apostle simply passes over

the officials, as he does in other cases. But the important point in his eyes is always his view of Law. Where the Spirit is, no Law is wanted, all good conduct will flow necessarily from the inner light. Where the Spirit is not, observance of ceremonial, and even of moral, laws can have no religious value. Everything rests upon that personal inspiration which the Apostle calls by the name of Faith. It was this view which brought upon St. Paul the bitter hostility of his own countrymen, and estranged him in some degree from the other Apostles. But in Rome, as indeed in other places, this free and lofty mysticism found but imperfect sympathy. While St. Paul was lying there as a prisoner, for the two years of his first captivity, he found much to encourage but something also to depress. His own friends, inspired by the sight of his bonds, waxed bolder to speak the word without fear, and made converts among the Praetorian Guard and even in Caesar's household. But there were others who did not preach what St. Paul held to be sound doctrine, who knew that they were giving him pain, yet would not or could not take his way. What this mode of teaching was we may gather with probability from the Epistle of Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas. By the end of the first century, and probably from the very beginning, the Church of Rome exhibited that strongly marked legal and disciplinarian character which it has borne ever since. The same thing is true of the other churches also. In none of them was the special teaching of St. Paul grasped or perpetuated; it was partially applied by St. Augustine, but was never operative on a large scale before Luther and the Reformation. It is not surprising that in Rome, the centre of the Empire and the very fountain of law and order, religion should have seized the reins of authority more decisively than elsewhere.

Another singular feature of the Church of Rome is that throughout the first two centuries it employed for all official purposes the language of Greece. All educated Roman gentlemen were more or less familiar with Greek, and a great part of the population of the capital used Greek habitually as their mother tongue. Nevertheless it would

be an error to speak of Rome as a bilingual city; and in the country districts of Italy, if we except the old Hellenic colonies, there were few places where Greek was understood at all. The causes of this remarkable preference for a strange tongue are to be found partly in the fact that the first missionaries had taught in Greek, and that the Bible in use was written in Greek. For the same reasons Greek continued to be the sacred language of the popular and world-wide cult of the Egyptian Isis. Another motive was the desire to express and guard the unity of the Church all over the Empire. Latin ousted Greek about the time when Pope Victor excommunicated the Asiatic Quartodecimans. The adoption of the vernacular coincided with the appearance of a new and more masterful spirit in the bishops of Rome, and marks the beginning of misunderstanding and estrangement between the West and the East. But this use of a foreign tongue must have been a great hindrance to the evangelization of Italy and of the whole West, and it probably tended to foment the suspicions of the mob against a community which deliberately made its worship unintelligible to a plain Latin man.

CHAPTER III

THE PERSECUTION OF NERO

We learn from the Epistle to the Philippians that Christianity had penetrated into the household of Nero, that vast establishment of freedmen and slaves of every type, nationality, and grade, ranging from what we may call ministers of the crown to the lowest menials, which was in close touch on the one hand with the Emperor himself, on the other with the governmental offices in all the imperial provinces. It is a remarkable fact that Caesar's household continued to be a stronghold of Christianity throughout the ages of persecution. The first definite spot in Rome that we can connect with the history of the Church is the Palatine Hill.

Within the palace the new faith could not fail to attract the notice of influential persons. There were many Jews in the court of Nero. Poppaea, his mistress, afterwards his wife, was favourably inclined towards them, and out of their flatteries Nero spun the extravagant dream that, if he were driven out of Rome, he might yet rule the East as King of Jerusalem. Gentile officials would mark the Christians as devotees of a new Oriental sect which practised secret rites, avoided the temples of the gods, and was probably stained by the vilest immorality, by magic, child-murder, and promiscuous lust.

As yet the only religions which had been definitely attacked by the Roman government had fallen under charges of the most shocking kind. The most remarkable instance in point is that of the Bacchanalia. Shortly before 186 B. C. an obscure Greek hierophant brought the Bacchic orgies into Etruria. From thence this fanaticism made its way into Rome. Complaint was made to the Consul Postumius by Publius Aebutius, a dissolute young man of

equestrian family, and his mistress, a freedwoman, Hispala Fecenia, who professed to give her evidence with the greatest fear and reluctance. According to this disreputable creature the orgies had at first been confined to women, but of late men had been admitted, and the meetings held by night. There were prophets who writhed in convulsions as they delivered the divine message; there were counterfeit miracles; there were drunkenness, licentious banquets, and bestial debauchery. Those who refused to submit to outrage were secretly murdered. The number of the initiated was very large, and included men and women of noble birth. The consul brought the matter before the Senate, who directed him and his colleague to hold an extraordinary inquiry into the facts, to offer rewards to informers, to seek out the priests, and immediately to forbid all meetings for the purpose of celebrating the orgies. The consuls did not profess as yet to know the truth in detail, but they were clearly of the opinion that popular gatherings by night, or even by day, could not be tolerated unless presided over by responsible officials in lawful form, that foreign cults might and ought to be suppressed, that secret worship could not be distinguished from conspiracy, and that religion could never be an excuse for immorality. The inquisition was carried out with extraordinary rigour, a reign of terror ensued, and great numbers were put to death, some on the general charge of disgusting immorality, others as implicated in crimes arising out of their superstition, especially poisonings, assassinations, perjury, and forgery of wills. Finally the Senate directed the consuls to destroy throughout Italy all but ancient shrines of Bacchus, and ordered that in future no one should celebrate the Bacchanalian orgies unless he was bound in conscience to do so. In this case he must apply to the Senate through the city praetor for special permission, and permission would in no case be granted except on condition that not more than five persons should attend the service, that there should be no collection of money and no priest.

Such is the account of this remarkable business given us by Livy, and confirmed, as far as regards the action of the

government, by the surviving text of the decree of the Senate. The tale told to the consuls by Aebutius and his paramour may have been, and not improbably was, as gross a concoction as that of Titus Oates. But, with this exception, the facts are indisputable. We see clearly the fierce credulity with which the Roman people caught up any suspicion of religious depravity. We see also the evidence which was regarded as sufficient proof of the crimes alleged. A new and foreign worship introduced into Rome by persons of no consideration, clandestine meetings by day, or worse still by night, an unauthorized, irresponsible priesthood, the collection of money—these were circumstances upon which the worst construction was put as a matter of course. The details were proved by the testimony of highly paid informers, or by confessions obtained by torture. Further, Livy does not assert that any particular law had been violated. The whole affair was an outrage upon Roman custom and sentiment; hence, as the ordinary courts could not deal with it, the Senate was compelled to interfere, to establish an extraordinary tribunal, and to regulate both the punishment of the convicts and the rewards of the witnesses. At the same time we see the great reluctance of the Senate to proscribe absolutely any form of worship; hence the lame conclusion of the decree. Much blood was shed, yet the Bacchanalia was not wholly suppressed; the government were content to place them under strict regulations, which would prevent abuse while not offending the god. The story throws a flood of light upon Nero's persecution of the Church, in which, after an interval of 200 years, all its main features recur again. Indeed it suffices to account for all the persecutions of the first two centuries, explaining at one and the same time their cause, their method, their irregularity, and their insufficiency.

There were three other cognate instances. Augustus forbade Roman citizens resident in Gaul to take any part in the rites of the Druids, in which human sacrifices were offered. Claudius is said to have absolutely proscribed the cult. Moloch-worship in Africa was severely handled by

Tiberius for the same reason; he crucified the priests on the trees beneath which young children had been immolated to this horrible god. Isis-worship again was supposed, not without reason, to foster immorality. Provoked by a vile intrigue which had been planned and perpetrated by the priests, and issued in the violation of a lady of rank, Tiberius pulled down the temple, crucified the priests, and threw the statue of the goddess into the river. On another occasion he arrested 4,000 freedmen, converts to Judaism or Isis-worship, and sent them to serve against the brigands of Sardinia.[1] Nevertheless, this dubious Egyptian religion was not rooted out; on the contrary, under the Flavian Emperors it became exceedingly popular; Druidism and Moloch-worship also survived, and though human sacrifice was a capital crime, it still continued, if we may believe Tertullian, to be offered secretly in Africa.[2] The truth is that no religion had as yet been forbidden by the Roman government. So long as men did not break the law and paid official respect to the established gods, more especially to the divinity of Caesar, they might worship what they pleased. Against Jews not even this occasional conformity was enforced, but conversion to Judaism was a crime.

Thus in Nero's time all the materials for a violent explosion against Christianity lay ready prepared—Jewish influence, Roman conservatism, strong and, though baseless, not unnatural suspicion, ominous precedents, a weak and vicious Emperor. The catastrophe was occasioned by a great public disaster—the terrible fire which, in the year 64, destroyed more than half of Rome.

By aristocratic hatred Nero himself was accused of kindling the flames. The stage-struck matricide was thought capable of any crime, and it was even said that he had put on his theatrical apparel, mounted the high roof of the palace of Maecenas, and sung the Fall of Troy while the great city was blazing beneath him. This is no doubt a fiction. It is probably false also that he deliberately hounded the people on against the Christians, in order to divert their fury from himself. But when the mob rose

[1] Tac. *Ann.* ii. 85. [2] Tert. *Apol.* 9.

against the Christians, charged them with setting the city on fire, and clamoured for their blood, no doubt he caught eagerly at this easy way of escape. For the rest the brief account given by Tacitus is as accurate as the historian cared to make it. He was a Stoic noble who hated Nero, and hated the Christians, and could not decide which he hated most. He speaks of the Founder of the Christian name as of one who had been executed, and justly executed, by Pontius Pilate, a civilized and responsible magistrate; of His religion as a pestilent superstition, and of His followers as low fanatics believed, and rightly believed, guilty of acts that were a disgrace to humanity. It was credible enough that such malignant reptiles should have endeavoured to destroy the glorious city in which they had made their dens.

There was a fierce outburst of popular execration; the police seized a number of Christian slaves who, when put to the torture, confessed their crime and denounced a great multitude of their fellow believers. All these were convicted and sentenced to death, 'not so much for incendiarism, as for hatred of the human race.' It really did not matter whether they had actually applied torches to the Roman temples and palaces; they were capable of that or any other enormity. They were exterminated accordingly with the utmost barbarity. Nero seized the opportunity of regaining the favour of the mob by a rather unusual and specially attractive spectacle. Some of the unhappy Christians were driven into the arena dressed in the skins of animals of the chase, packs of fierce hounds were turned in upon them, and they were torn to pieces. After nightfall came the crowning enjoyment of this great popular holiday. The splendid imperial gardens on the Vatican were thrown open, and chariot races were exhibited in the Circus of Caligula. The track was illuminated by Christian men and women, dressed in tunics steeped in tar, nailed to high crosses, and then set on fire to serve as flambeaux. Meanwhile Nero himself, in the garb of a common charioteer, drove his horses round the oval course, or, dismounting in the interval of the races, mingled freely with the spectators,

courting their plaudits, and passing jests with the scum of the streets. It was this, the gross indecorum of Caesar, who was not ashamed to pose as a jockey, and welcomed as incense the stinking breath of the proletariate, that stirred the gall of Tacitus. It was right enough that convicts of a peculiarly odious kind should be put to death in ways which, after all, were not unexampled; but that the master of the world, the head of the Roman name, should so degrade himself was nothing less than an infamy. Hence this wholesome act of severity missed its point. People began to pity the Christians, bad as they were considered, and murmured that they had been destroyed not for the good of the State, but to glut the cruelty of one man.

Such is the general drift of the account given of the first great persecution by one of the most eminent of Roman historians. Tacitus was a man of high intelligence and humane disposition, but he was first and foremost an aristocrat of the old rock. He delighted in tragedy on the grand scale; no writer can describe it with finer dramatic power. But the squalid details of reality are as repulsive to him as they are to Virgil. This Oriental sect was such a squalid detail; its agony afforded him material for a brilliant paragraph, and another vent for his detestation of Nero; but he had never taken the trouble to ask what a Christian really was.

The tidings of the Roman massacre caused a dreadful shock to the scattered churches, especially in the East. They had been shielded on more than one occasion by the government against the intrigues of the Jews and the violence of the populace. The provinces generally were well content with the new order of things, under which they enjoyed much more security and prosperity, and the Christians were even more loyal and quiet than any other class. They prayed for the Emperor in their assemblages, and placed great trust in the equity of Roman law and the good sense of Roman magistrates. There was no reason why they should be molested; they might even hope, in no long time, to gain the hearts of their rulers and see the Empire transformed into the Kingdom of Christ. Why

should they not expect the same toleration that was accorded to their near relatives, the Jews? All these dreams were shattered in a moment, and Rome appeared to their horrified eyes as Babylon drunk with the blood of the saints. Nero himself they figured as the Beast, bearing a mystic number significant of all iniquity. They could not even believe that the wicked Emperor was dead. Long after his tragic end they regarded him as a kind of incarnation of the spirit of evil, who would return to wage the final struggle between light and darkness. We find this strange expectation in the Apocalypse, in the poet Commodian, in the *Sibylline Oracles*; in the East it lingered on as late as the thirteenth century.

The horror was deepened by the sense that the Neronian fury might be repeated at any moment and at any place. It was no doubt true that Christianity had not been definitely proscribed any more than Moloch-worship. But the causes of the persecution—the newness and foreignness of their religion, its clandestine meetings sometimes held by night, its possession of a common fund of money, of mysterious rites, and of a priesthood wielding extensive powers, its refusal to worship Caesar, and the deeply rooted suspicion of immorality—all these remained, and could neither be got rid of nor explained away. It was certain that the same trouble would recur. Henceforth every Christian must be prepared to resist unto blood. Any magistrate in any province might follow the Emperor's example. It was not sure that they would do so; the censorial power often slept, and much was left to the discretion of the governor. But any legate or proconsul might at any moment draw the sword from its sheath. It was at this time probably that Antipas was put to death at Pergamus, and St. John was deported to the isle of Patmos. At Rome also there were executions after the first great massacre, and among the victims were the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.

When and how these illustrious men were apprehended we do not know. St. Peter may have been dwelling in the capital for some years. St. Paul may have been seized in

the East and sent a prisoner to the capital, where alone a Roman citizen could be tried for his life. Neither do we know the exact day or year of their deaths. But as St. Paul was tried by himself, and as his examination occupied at least two sessions of the court, we may infer that by that time the first panic had subsided, and more orderly and usual methods of procedure were observed. If we could place any confidence in the famous *Quo Vadis* legend, we might gather from it that St. Peter had been in concealment during the massacre, and was seized or gave himself up some little time after. St. Paul died, as was his right, by the sword on the road to Ostia; Peter no doubt by crucifixion in the Circus of Caligula, where so many of his disciples had perished. Tradition asserts that he was nailed to the cross head downwards by his own desire, because he would not, even in his passion, be brought into comparison with his Master. This form of execution was not unknown, but the story comes from a tainted source. They were buried close by the spots where they perished—St. Paul on the Ostian, St. Peter on the Aurelian Way. Over their bodies the pious hands of the Church built modest yet not inconspicuous tombs, to which Gaius of Rome refers, about the year 200, as their 'trophies'. This fact might appear surprising if we were not aware that the Romans did not pursue the dead, and that the rights of sepulture were freely accorded and jealously guarded. The right of declaring the law of the tomb, and of granting licences for exhumation and removal of the dead, belonged to the college of Pontiffs; the duty of enforcing the law fell upon the praetor or provincial governor, and offences against the sepulchre were treated as most heinous crimes. With such impartial vigour did the Pontiffs (of whom the Emperor himself was chief) discharge their functions that they were allowed to retain it at least as late as the reign of the Christian Emperor Constans. The bodies of the two Apostles remained undisturbed in their original graves till the year 258, when they appear to have been removed for a time to the Catacomb of St. Sebastian for better security, the persecution of Valerian being then at its

height. They were 'deposited' in this temporary resting-place on June 29, which day, through some confusion in the records, came afterwards to be regarded as that of their martyrdom. Even the year of their death is not accurately known. The computations of eminent scholars vary between 64 A. D. and 68 A. D., and, while some place both deaths in the same year, others do not. Soon after the accession of Constantine two splendid basilicas were reared above the graves, and the visitor to the present churches of St. Peter and St. Paul may not unreasonably believe that the dust of the Apostles still reposes beneath their altars.

These martyrdoms may be regarded as the true foundation of the Church of Rome. These two great heroes of the faith were possibly divided in their lives, but death united them in the veneration of Christendom. The possession of their tombs shed lustre upon the city in which they had fought their last fight, and it was claimed that the right of interpreting their doctrine, with the right of inheritance to their apostolic commissions, passed by divine ordinance to him who was regarded as their successor in the see of Rome. The history of the Church of the West is in fact the record of long-continued and finally successful efforts to enforce this claim.

Shortly before these events, in the year 62, James, the Lord's brother, had been put to death in Jerusalem. The account of his martyrdom given by Hegesippus[1] is filled up with legendary and incredible details. According to Josephus, a contemporary and trustworthy author, the murder, for it was no better, was perpetrated in the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of the new procurator Albinus. The High Priest Hanan, the younger son of that Hanan before whom St. Paul had been brought by Claudius Lysias, a Sadducee and a reckless cruel man, availing himself of the temporary interregnum, arrested James and some others, who were probably also Christians, brought them before the Sanhedrim, and caused them to be stoned. It was an illegal act, for the Sanhedrim had no power to inflict the death penalty. A number of respectable

[1] Eus. *H. E.* ii. 23.

Jews immediately laid a complaint before Albinus. The procurator was highly displeased, but judged it prudent to leave the matter in the hands of Herod Agrippa II, who was official guardian of the Temple, and had the right of appointing the High Priest. Agrippa at once deposed Hanan.

CHAPTER IV

THE FLAVIAN HOUSE: VESPASIAN AND TITUS

Vespasian was raised to the throne in 69 as the victor in a triangular duel between the legions of the West, the legions of Italy, and the legions of the East. He was in command of the Syrian army, which just at the time had been considerably strengthened to meet the necessities of the great Jewish rebellion, and was full of confidence in itself and in its leader. Half the great force assembled would be Roman citizens of one kind or another, but the other half would be auxiliaries drawn from various provinces, and not Romans at all in the real sense of the word.

It was the Oriental provincials who supplied the enthusiasm that determined his triumph. They remembered his father, Flavius Sabinus, as the Honest Farmer who had been honoured with statues in many towns, because he had treated the taxpayers with a degree of consideration not often shown by publicans. This was a strong and intelligible reason why the Easterns should rally round the son. But they were not content with enthusiastic support; they actually deified this elderly respectable officer. The oracle of Mount Carmel promised him the fulfilment of all his wishes. At Alexandria he was enabled to work miracles, and the surgeons attested that by his touch he had opened the eyes of a blind man and cured the paralysis of a cripple. English officers have been worshipped in India for the same reason, because they were upright and capable; and it is not difficult to understand why the oppressed provincials of the East saw in Vespasian, caustic, hard-bitten, and wholly unromantic as he was, a kind of saviour. Nor did he disappoint their expectations. He favoured the Egyptian religions, as did his sons after him. He was a strict, just, wise, and economical ruler. Men complained that he increased the taxes

and levied them with severity, but it was estimated that a sum of nearly £400,000,000 would barely suffice to repair the frightful ravages of the civil war, and it was not possible for him to be generous. Yet he did much to heal disorder and restore prosperity, and his coins bear, not without justice, the legend of *Roma Resurgens.*

Vespasian died in 79, and was succeeded by his son, the accomplished Titus, who counted the day lost on which he had done no kind action, and completed the building of the Colosseum, which has witnessed more bloodshed and agony than any other spot in the world. He was the lover of the elderly Jewish queen Berenice, daughter of Agrippa I, a woman of many strange experiences, who had heard St. Paul defend himself before Festus at Caesarea, and at the age of fifty-one was still charming enough to hold in thrall the heart of a middle-aged and artistic emperor. Titus reigned only for something over two years.

The chief event for our purpose in the time of these two Emperors is the sack of Jerusalem and burning of the Temple in the year 70. The proximate cause of this appalling tragedy is to be found in the character of the procurators to whom, after the death of Herod Agrippa I, the government of Palestine was again committed. They were all cruel, rapacious, and entirely unable to understand the character of the people over whom they were placed. Some of them were men whose antecedents ought to have disqualified them for this office. Cuspius Fadus was harsh and unsympathetic, Tiberius Alexander, nephew of Philo the philosopher, was a renegade Jew, Felix was a freedman of the Emperor Claudius. It was an unheard-of thing that the procuratorship of Palestine, which carried with it military command, should be bestowed upon such a man. Tacitus says of Felix that 'he wielded the power of a king in the spirit of a slave',[1] and that, 'relying upon the support of his powerful brother Pallas,' who was also a freedman of the Emperor, 'he thought he could venture upon any crime with impunity.' Festus is described in the Book of Acts as corrupt, Albinus was worse, and Gessius Florus, a Greek who gained his position through the influence

[1] *Hist.* v. 9.

of his wife with Poppaea, was worst of all. The shameless greed and unbounded cruelty of this man finally drove the Jews to revolt.

In the year 66 there were violent scenes in Caesarea, arising out of the hostility between the pagan and the Jewish inhabitants. Nero had taken away from the latter their civic privileges, and reduced them to a position of municipal inferiority. Elated by this triumph, the pagans proceeded to oust the Jews from a synagogue in the town; nor would Florus intervene, though he had accepted a bribe of eight talents as the price of his favour. The affair, though not in itself of great importance, caused much indignation in Jerusalem; but it would probably have passed off had not Florus at this juncture, as if on purpose to provoke a war, robbed the Temple treasury of a sum of seventeen talents. Still the people did not rise; they contented themselves with mockery, and sent round a basket begging for pence for the poor governor. Florus was infuriated by this affront, demanded the surrender of its authors, and when the leaders of the people did not at once comply, let loose his troops upon the crowded streets. There was a frightful massacre, in which 3,600 people are said to have perished. The massacre was followed by arrests, scourgings, and crucifixions. Florus was carried so far by his thirst for vengeance that he even nailed to the cross several men who, though Jews by birth, were Roman knights, an unparalleled act of illegality.

These incidents well deserve observation, as showing what atrocities were committed in the provinces under the rule of the patrician Emperors. Of the struggle itself we can give here but a brief account. The rebellion almost immediately broke out. Cool-headed men, like Agrippa and Josephus, saw from the first its utter hopelessness, but their advice was swept aside by the raging current of popular fury. The daily sacrifice for the Emperor was discontinued, an act tantamount to a formal declaration of war. All the Jews in Palestine rose in arms, and even in the borderlands as far as Alexandria there were seditions and massacres. Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, advanced with a strong army as far as Jerusalem, but found himself compelled to retreat

with great loss. In 67 Nero entrusted the conduct of the war to Vespasian, a well-tried officer, whom he did not like. In the following year Vespasian cleared Galilee, and was ready to begin the siege of Jerusalem when the news arrived of the death of Nero on June 9, 68. This event changed everything, and for a time the Jewish war was almost suspended. The elevation of Galba and his swift destruction, the rise of Otho and his defeat by Vitellius, showed clearly that the Empire would be the prize of the strongest. The army of the East resolved to take a hand in the great game, and on July 1, 69, Vespasian was proclaimed Emperor, whether by the legions of Palestine or those of Egypt is doubtful. Before the end of the month the whole of the Orient had adopted his cause. One of his first actions was to pardon the historian Josephus, who, if he had occasioned the Romans great losses by his stubborn defence of Jotapata, had made amends by prophesying, while Nero was still alive, that God would make Vespasian master of the world.

When Vespasian went to Rome to take up the reins of government, he left the conduct of the Jewish war in the capable hands of his son Titus, by whom, on September 2, 70, Jerusalem was taken by storm and the Temple burnt to the ground. The resistance had been most desperate, and the unhappy people, torn by internal dissensions, hating one another hardly less than they hated the Romans, after suffering the last extremities of plague and famine, became subject to the laws of war. They were cut down in the streets and houses, reduced to slavery, sent to labour in the mines, or compelled to slay one another as gladiators in the amphitheatre. It is said that more than a million lives were lost during this terrible siege. The Zealots maintained a fanatical resistance until the fortress of Masada fell in 73.

Before the final assault upon the gates of Jerusalem Josephus tells us that a council of war was held, in which it was decided that the Temple should be spared. Sulpicius Severus,[1] on the other hand, affirms that Titus had set his mind upon the destruction of the sanctuary, 'in order that

[1] *Chron.* ii. 30.

the religion of the Jews and Christians might be more completely abolished. For these religions, though hostile to one another, yet sprang from the same authors, the Christians being an offshoot of the Jews. He judged, therefore, that if the root was cut away the tree would quickly perish.' It has been supposed, with some probability, that Sulpicius is here quoting from the lost portion of the *Histories* of Tacitus. If this is the case, his statement, though it contradicts Josephus, has high authority. If we might assume it to be true, it would follow that Titus was quite aware of the difference between the Jew and the Christian. But in any case we can hardly doubt that he was well instructed in this point. The flight of the Christians to Pella before the formation of the siege must have been known to the Roman commanders, and there were plenty of people who could, and no doubt did, give Titus full and accurate information as to the political and religious differences of the Jewish people.

One not unimportant consequence of the destruction of the Sacred City was that all Jews were henceforth compelled to pay the didrachma to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome. This gave the government and the Roman priests a strong reason for preventing, or refusing to recognize, conversions from Judaism to Christianity. Much more important was the cessation of all Jewish sacrifices, even those of Passover and of the Day of Atonement. With them perished the old Sanhedrim, which in later times had been the stronghold of the Sadducees.

The popular religious party, the Pharisees and Rabbis, stepped into the vacant place. Jochanan, the son of Zakkai, established a school of the Law at Jamnia, or Jabna, which grew into a new Sanhedrim, adorned by a succession of eminent though sometimes divergent teachers—Gamaliel the younger, Eliezer, Akiba, and others—and accepted by all Jews as the supreme authority for the interpretation of the Law. Out of their speculations the Talmud finally arose. But the most cherished object of the new doctors was to 'build a hedge round the Law'; in other words, to keep alive and concentrate the national spirit of the Jews, to foster the Messianic hope, and to fan the hatred of their countrymen on

the one hand against the pagan government, and on the other against the Christians. They were largely responsible for the rebellion of Barcochba against Hadrian, in which Akiba perished. They gave the Christians the nickname of Minim (Apostates), and employed against them a special curse, the *Birchath ha Minim*, which was recited in the daily prayers. They decided that the Gospels might be burned, though the holy Name of God occurred therein. Eliezer, one of the most famous of these Rabbis, was once forced to appear before a heathen tribunal, and regarded this pollution as a just punishment for his sin in accepting a solution of a legal question given to him by a Jewish Christian, and derived, according to his informant, from Jesus Himself. By these fanatics was concocted the story that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary, by a Gentile soldier Panthera, a striking proof of their hatred for one who did not deserve to be hated, but a striking proof also that they did not believe Him to be the son of Joseph. Thus the destruction of the Temple finally cut asunder the Church and the synagogue. From this time forth the Jews exhibit a bitter animosity against the Christians, and the Christians regard the Jews with a certain coldness gradually deepening into actual hostility. The sense of estrangement is noticeable in the Epistle of Barnabas and in the Gospel of St. John. But not until the time of Constantine do we find Christians using the language of hatred towards their spiritual fathers, or showing any desire to retaliate.

What became of the Nazoræi or Jew Christians of Palestine?

They can hardly have been a numerous body in the time of Vespasian. The political unrest, which had been one main cause of the Crucifixion, and had grown fiercer and fiercer till it culminated in the hopeless agony of the war, greatly widened the gulf between Jew and Gentile. The Christians were hated not so much as religious schismatics—this might have been tolerated, for after all they were no worse than the Essenes—but as apostates from the national cause, as traitors to the fatherland, who in the supreme crisis of its destiny counselled submission to the hated rule of the

foreigner. This was the unpardonable sin of Jesus and His followers. They had wounded the pride of race far more deeply than the prophet Jeremiah, who had only reproved his countrymen for breach of faith with the Babylonians.

In the Book of Acts the Nazoræans appear as a reformed Jewish Church, still worshipping in the Temple, and still jealous for the Law. Some of them were strongly opposed to St. Paul, because he was supposed to have taught that the Levitical system was no longer binding even upon the Jew. Many, if not all of them, accepted loyally the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, that the born Jew should still observe the traditions of his fathers, while the Gentile should accept only that minimum of ceremonial which was ordained in the covenant with Noah. The Law was the great point of division. With the destruction of Jerusalem the Law itself was in great part destroyed. The one sanctuary of Judaism had vanished; all sacrifice became an impossibility; the priests were scattered, their authority passed into the hands of the Rabbis and the rulers of the synagogue, and Judaism became what it has been ever since. It was a tremendous change, and it must have been incredible beforehand that the old religion would survive the shock.

There must have been great searchings of heart. Some of the Nazoræans stood fast through all catastrophes; those who had fled to Pella were too deeply committed to the Church to recede. But great pressure was exerted by the new Sanhedrim. There was bitter disappointment with Jesus Himself: He had not saved the house of David from all their enemies and from the hands of them that hated them, at any rate not in the way that many expected. To others, again, it must have seemed an act of baseness to forsake their brothers by blood in the dark hour, and go over to the friends of Titus. Many must have abandoned the Church; others would draw aloof from the Gentile Christians, who looked with coolness, perhaps with joy, on the national humiliation, or would devise means of keeping, as closely as possible, in touch with their compatriots, of minimizing the difference between themselves and the Rabbinists.

Thus some were absorbed into the Catholic Church. Of

such were Ariston of Pella, author of a Dialogue between Jason, a Hebrew Christian, and Papiscus, an Alexandrian Jew.[1] Another was Hegesippus, the father of ecclesiastical history, who travelled from the East to Italy, visiting all the famous churches on his way, drawing up lists of their bishops, and satisfying himself that in each and all of them things were ordered in accordance with 'the Law, the prophets, and the Lord'.[2]

Others formed communities apart, gradually drifting into complete estrangement from their Jewish brethren on the one hand, and from the Catholic Church on the other. From the Epistles of Ignatius we learn that at Antioch, in the early years of the second century, there were Christians who kept the Sabbath and lived according to Judaism. Justin Martyr knew Jews who strictly kept the Law, regarded Jesus as a mere man, yet believed Him to be the promised Messiah. Justin, in his large-hearted way, thought that they might 'perhaps' be saved, provided that they did not attempt to force their own creed on better-instructed Christians. But other church people, he adds, would neither speak nor eat with them.[3] Somewhat later Irenaeus speaks (i. 26) of a Jewish Christian sect whom he calls Ebionites. He tells us that they used only the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and rejected the Apostle Paul, calling him an apostate from the Law; that they explain the prophecies 'too curiously'; that they are circumcised, and persist in those practices which are according to the Law, and in a Jewish manner of life; finally, that they adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God. In another passage (iii. 21) he tells us that Theodotion of Ephesus and Aquila of Pontus (Aquila seems to have been an Ebionite, as was probably Symmachus, who rendered the word in question in the same way) translated the well-known verse of Isaiah, 'Behold a young woman shall conceive,' that the Ebionites accepted this version, and regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph. In the next century Origen distinguishes between two kinds of Ebionites, both of whom observed the Law, but one accepted while the other

[1] Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchristl. Litt.* i. 92. [2] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 22.
[3] Justin, *Trypho*, 47, 48.

denied the Virgin Birth.[1] According to Eusebius, even these latter did not believe the pre-existence of Christ.[2] The historian adds that they did not recognize the Epistles of St. Paul, used only the Gospel according to the Hebrews, kept the Sabbath, but kept also Sunday, and on that day celebrated the Eucharist. In other passages[3] Eusebius speaks of the Ebionites as all alike, affirming that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, and building this belief upon the Gospel according to St. Matthew. These statements also appear to come from Origen, but from Origen's remarks upon the teaching of the Ebionite Symmachus; hence they are not to be regarded as contradicting what he said in the *Contra Celsum* as to the two kinds of Ebionites.

About the close of the fourth century Epiphanius not only distinguishes two classes of Jewish Christians, but gives them different names, calling the orthodox sect Nazoræans, the unorthodox Ebionites. The former, with whom he does not appear to have been personally acquainted, he regarded with such contempt on account of their Judaism that he had never taken the trouble to ascertain what they really believed about Christ, or what their gospel really contained.[4] Jerome knew them well, having visited their chief settlement at Beroea.[5] He claims to have translated their gospel, which was not that of Matthew, but that according to the Hebrews, into Greek and Latin, and says that they believed in Christ the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary and crucified under Pontius Pilate.[6] Of the Ebionites Epiphanius tells us[7] that they adulterated their essential Judaism with strange notions derived from Samaritans, from Elxai, and others, among whom may be included the Essenes, that they regarded Jesus as son of Joseph, 'mere man' yet elected by God, so that Christ descended upon him at his baptism in figure of a dove, and he was known thenceforth as Son of

[1] *Contra Celsum*, v. 61; Lomm. xix. 283.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* iii. 27. But Origen, whom Eusebius is here following, does not say anything about pre-existence.

[3] *H. E.* v. 8, quoting Irenaeus; vi. 17, referring to Origen.

[4] Epiph. *Haer.* 29, c. 9, ed. Vales. [5] *de Vir. Ill.* 2, 3; *Opp.* ii. 818, 819.

[6] *Ep.* 112 *ad Augustinum*, i. p. 740; *Comm in Matt.* ii. 12, ed. Vall. t. vii. p. 77.

[7] *Haer.* 30, c. 17.

God. Of Christ they taught that he was created yet greater than the archangels, and that he was one of the two great Viceroys or Powers appointed to govern respectively the present world and the world to come, the other being the Devil, who is Lord of earth, as Christ is Lord of heaven. Indeed, the teaching of these Epiphanian Ebionites so closely resembles that of the *Clementine Homilies* that we may regard this singular book as a manifesto of the sect. But it may be observed that the author of the *Homilies*, while emphatically denying that Jesus Christ is God, appears to have admitted the Virgin Birth.[1]

The Ebionites, as they are entitled by Epiphanius, were much more educated and self-confident than the Nazoræans. On two occasions they seem to have formed large hopes of conquest. Early in the third century one Alexander of Apamea carried the book of Elxai to Rome, and in the fourth century it is very possible that the author or last editor of the *Clementine Homilies* had in view, amongst other objects, that of forming an alliance with the extreme Arians. Their literary activity was considerable. They composed new Gospels, studied with some intelligence not only the Gnostics but the Apologists, and helped to form the cycle of the Petrine romances. Possibly it was they who first confused Semo Sancus with Simon Magus; at any rate, if they did not originate they elaborated the legend of the debate between Peter and Magus. But their ideas are always bizarre, Oriental, and confused, and it is most difficult to believe that in any point they reproduce the genuine tradition of the old Nazoræans of Jerusalem.

After the fifth century all these Jewish Christians vanish from history, though it is possible that traces of their influ-

[1] See *Hom.* xvi. 14, the reference to Emmanuel; this may perhaps go to show that the Gospel according to the Hebrews included the history of the Nativity as given by Matthew. So Theodotus of Byzantium, who is said by Hippolytus to have borrowed many things from the Ebionites, believed the Virgin Birth, yet denied the divinity of Christ (*Philos.* vii. 35), as indeed did Mahommed. On the Gospel according to the Hebrews see Harnack, *G. A.L.* i. 6; *Chron.* i. 625; Bardenhewer, *Gesch. d. altkirch. Litt.* i. 379. It may be as old as the first century, but there are Gnostical traits in the fragment on the Baptism which cannot belong to the primitive Christian tradition.

ence, and even some communities descended from them, may still be found in the districts about the Euphrates.

But from the point of view of the ecclesiastical historian the most important consequence of the destruction of Jerusalem was that it left the Church of Rome without a rival in the veneration of the Christian world. The Church of Jerusalem sank into an obscurity from which it did not emerge till the middle of the third century. Even then its bishop remained subject to the metropolitan of Caesarea. In the fourth century it was adorned with magnificent churches by Constantine, and its holy places became a resort of pilgrims from the furthest limits of the Empire. Gradually it rose to a place of honour among the Patriarchates of the East. But even in the third century the time had long gone by when Jerusalem, the mother of all churches, could claim equality with the Church of the capital of the world.

It is strange that Christian writers should have taken so little notice of this soul-shaking catastrophe. It is mentioned in the Epistle of Barnabas, and probably suggested the peculiar view of the Law which we shall find in that document. But the Gospel of St. John, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas never even allude to an event which we should have expected to occupy the first place in thoughts of an intelligent Christian of the time. The Church, forewarned by the prophecy of our Lord, had made its reflections beforehand. She had been taught by St. Paul to distinguish the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children, from Jerusalem which is above, is free and the mother of us all. St. John in the Apocalypse had spoken of the great city where our Lord was crucified as Sodom and Egypt, and the Epistle to the Hebrews written shortly before its fall had given solemn warning that the cessation of the old sacrifices could in no way justify the denial of Him who was the one great Sacrifice. The Christian community therefore could see in the destruction of Jerusalem only an expected stroke of the divine justice and an expected sign of the approaching end of the world. This is the view which is taken also by the

author of the Fourth Book of the *Sibylline Oracles*. This unknown contemporaneous writer, who was surely a Christian, though he does not mention the name of Christ, counts three great signs of the nearness of the Day of Judgement—the Fall of Jerusalem, the flight of Nero into Parthia, whence he will shortly return as Antichrist, and the terrible eruption of Vesuvius in 79. He sees 'the exile from Rome' returning from beyond the Euphrates followed by a host of many myriads. Then will come the dawning of the Last Day, the sign of a sword in heaven, the blast of the divine trumpet, and the world-destroying fire, of which the flames which had just ravaged the fairest district of Campania were but a foretaste. There were Christians in Pompeii, as we know from a *graffito* scribbled upon the wall of a house. Some of them probably met the same fate as Pliny the Elder, and their sufferings would excite the liveliest commiserations among their fellow believers. It was no time for cool historical reflection when such disasters were occurring, and the mind of the Church was thrown off its balance by the hourly expectation of the Great Assize.

Vespasian and Titus appear to have left the Church in peace. They were extremely anxious to show that they had not inherited any portion of the evil traditions of the Neronian age; their policy was directed towards the restoration of order and contentment, they had no quarrel with the Christians, who had not borne arms against them, and the Jews had lost all influence. Domitian also, for the greater part of his reign, left the Church unmolested. But in his last year there was a sharp persecution in Rome.

CHAPTER V

DOMITIAN

Domitian was a prince of most singular character. Suetonius describes him as licentious, vain, extravagant, and bloodthirsty, with a devilish ingenuity in his cruelty; he played with his victims like a cat with a mouse, and delighted to fill them with the terror of death even when he did mean to strike. Juvenal describes the indignities which he heaped upon the imperial council, whom he called together on one occasion to decide how a fish of remarkable size ought to be cooked. Tacitus hated him and describes the fifteen years of his government as an unbroken reign of terror, and Pliny the Younger tells us of the frequent trials for high treason and the unbridled licence allowed to Carus and Regulus, the leaders of the infamous band of *delators*. Domitian raged against the Stoic philosophers and the illustrious coterie of nobles who patronized them and lived by their precepts—not wholly without provocation, for they were stubborn republicans, and would certainly have upset the Empire if they had had the power. Others among his victims may have been reasonably suspected of plotting against his life. But he was charged with deliberately sending rich men to execution in order to replenish the treasury which he had exhausted by his own extravagance.

It is not inconsistent with these grave charges that he was a poet and a reciter, and that he patronized men of letters. Yet there was a reverse side to the picture. He is said to have taken for his model the stern and capable Tiberius, and Suetonius assures us that the provinces had never been better governed than in the days of Domitian. He presided with dignity and wisdom over his high court of justice. He was a severe censor of the public morals, though even here he was barbarous, putting Acilius Glabrio to death because he had

disgraced his rank by fighting with wild beasts in the arena.[1] He was in his way religious, took his title of Pontifex Maximus most seriously, wore little effigies of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva in his crown, and punished severely all disrespect towards the gods. He showed great favour also towards the deities of Egypt who had been so gracious to his father Vespasian and built a temple to Isis and Serapis. He allowed himself to be addressed as 'our lord and god', and, while he wore upon his own diadem the figures of the three Roman deities, he compelled the assistant priests to wear his own effigy in addition upon theirs.

He has been described by a modern historian as a resolute intelligent autocrat, and it is true that he shared the fate of his model Tiberius; the portraits of both emperors were painted by enemies who took a hearty delight in their task. It may be that he was bent upon extending to the utmost limits the imperial power, that he used his power upon the whole well, but struck down with a ruthless hand all who murmured against his usurpations. He may not have been so frivolous as Juvenal and Suetonius make him; he may have had an intelligible policy like our own Henry VIII; but it can hardly be doubted that he was vicious, jealous, and tyrannical.

Juvenal tells us that after shedding floods of the noblest blood in Rome he perished as soon as he became an object of dread to mean people. He was killed in the palace on September 18, 96, by a band of vulgar assassins headed by one Stephanus, who had been steward to Flavia Domitilla. But Juvenal's expression is misleading: the actual murderers were but tools in the hands of much more distinguished criminals. Who these were no one knew for certain. There were many who hated and feared Domitian. Stephanus may have been avenging the wrongs of his former mistress; the adulterous Empress Domitia had reason to think her life in danger; Norbanus and Petronius Secundus, the prefects of the guard, were suspected of complicity, and the fierce old Stoic Corellius Rufus seems to have known and approved of the plot. But the actual murderers are

[1] See below, p. 51.

said to have had motives of their own, and this may well have been the case.

That Domitian persecuted the Christians in Rome during the last year of his reign, and that he persecuted them as Christians, may be regarded as certain.

Clement of Rome, writing shortly after the assassination, apologizes to the Corinthians for not having sooner attended to their troubles, and gives as a reason for the delay 'the sudden and repeated calamities and reverses' which had befallen the Church of Rome. Hermas the prophet, who began to write in the lifetime of Clement, speaks of one Maximus as having recently denied the faith; indeed a great part of the *Shepherd* appears to have been suggested by a recent persecution in which many had fallen and some had even denounced their brethren. The question which is distracting the Roman Church in the time of Hermas is whether these *lapsi* can upon any terms be re-admitted to communion. Both these contemporary writers may be taken to prove that there had been a severe and extensive raid upon the Church, that there had been suspicions of a conspiracy among the Christians, and that many had been arrested and tortured with a view to the discovery of the confederates. Irenaeus also, some eighty or ninety years later, charges Domitian with persecution, and places at this time the imprisonment of St. John in Patmos and the writing of the Apocalypse. In this addition the Father is probably mistaken. There is no reason to suppose that Domitian's action extended beyond Italy; and Hegesippus and Tertullian, who both mention the persecution, agree that it was short. We have also a significant piece of evidence from the pagan side. Pliny, in his famous dispatch to Trajan, tells the Emperor that though many Christians had been tried for their lives in Rome during his recollection, he was ignorant of the procedure followed in such cases, because his own practice at the bar had been exclusively in the civil courts or in cases of impeachment before the Senate. Now as Pliny was little more than an infant in the time of Nero, as Vespasian and Titus left the Church undisturbed, as Nerva restored those who had been banished

by his predecessor, and suffered none to be accused of 'impiety or Judaism', we may infer with tolerable certainty that these 'trials' had occurred in the reign of Domitian. It would seem also that the persecution of Domitian was conducted with due observance of the forms of law, and was at any rate more decent and regular than that of Nero. We cannot regard all this positive evidence as contradicted by the silence of Suetonius and Dion Cassius. The former gives barely a line to the persecution of Nero, which he reckons among the few good actions of that bad emperor; while Dion, though he wrote after the death of Severus, never mentions the Christians at all, for the few places where the name occurs in our abstract of his history are evidently notes inserted by the Epitomator Xiphilinus, a monk of the eleventh century. We need not suppose that these writers deliberately suppressed all information as to the history of the Church. In our eyes the persecutions are invested with the deepest interest. But in those of a Roman emperor or a Roman historian they were merely items of police news. Scores of dim sects were struggling for existence among the lower classes. Who could foresee at that time that this particular enthusiasm was destined to so mighty a future? In the second century the Church began to attract attention from eminent pagans; but only Celsus, one of the most remarkable men of his time, had some inkling of its political importance. Even the Church did not keep the register of its sufferings with business-like accuracy. We should have known little about the persecution of Nero but for Tacitus, and nothing about the persecution in Bithynia but for the preservation of one copy of Pliny's dispatch. There were many martyrs whose very names we do not know. Generally speaking, during the first two centuries, unless the sufferer was a distinguished ecclesiastic, or unless the local church happened to possess a literary brother who could tell the moving tale, there was no record. Some rough, ill-spelt, and ill-written accounts of what had happened may have been sent round to the neighbouring communities, but they have not survived.

We are obliged, therefore, to rely upon inferences and

combinations, if we wish to answer the question whether any of Domitian's victims were really Christians, though not known as such to Suetonius or Dion Cassius.

It may be noticed at starting that one of the methods employed by Domitian for replenishing his empty treasury was to extort with great severity the old Temple tax of the didrachma which, after the fall of Jerusalem, all Jews had been ordered to pay to Jupiter Capitolinus. 'The fiscal impost upon the Jews,' says Suetonius, 'was levied with extreme harshness. Delators gave in the names of those who were living Jewish lives though they did not openly profess that religion, or those who, concealing their nationality, had not paid the tribute imposed upon their race.'[1] We know pretty well what is meant by 'extreme harshness' in the reign of Domitian. There would be tortures and executions in plenty. Nor is it difficult to see how these hard measures would affect Jew or Gentile converts to Christianity. The former might easily be charged with 'concealing their nationality', the latter, quite as easily, with 'living a Jewish life though they did not call themselves Jews'. There was a difference between a Jew and a Christian, and the difference was pretty well known in Rome, but fiscal officers urged on by Domitian would be in no mood to discuss theological subtleties. Nor would any of the accused venture to plead in a court of law that he was a Christian. For though Christianity in itself was not exactly a crime, refusal to adore the gods, including Domitian himself, was undoubtedly a capital offence. The levying of the didrachma, therefore, must have led to great suffering among the lower class. Were there any victims of higher degree? When men are tortured they will denounce, and they will denounce by preference those who are greater than themselves, which is indeed what the inquisitor means them to do.

Let us now listen to what Dion Cassius says:—

'In the same year he killed, amongst many others, Flavius Clemens, one of the consuls, his own cousin, and husband of Flavia Domitilla, who also was his kinswoman. Against both was brought the charge of godlessness, under

[1] Suet. *Vit. Dom.* c. 12. 2.

which many others were condemned as having run after the customs of the Jews. Some were put to death. Domitilla was merely banished to Pandataria. Glabrio, who had been consul with Trajan (in 91), was executed for the usual crimes and also because he fought with wild beasts.'[1]

It is not clear whether Dion means that Acilius Glabrio was charged with Judaism; it was the belief of Fronto and of Marcus Aurelius that Domitian killed him for degrading his rank by appearing in the arena as a common *venator*. Juvenal says that Glabrio was put to death though he had done so, meaning that he had professed to care for nothing but low sports in order that he might disarm the tyrant's suspicion. Suetonius asserts that he fell under a charge of high treason, and this may very well be the meaning of Dion. We can say no more with confidence about this unfortunate man. But it is known that members of his family belonged to the Church in the next century, and the great Roman archaeologists are of opinion that the frescoes which decorate the tombs of the Acilii in the catacomb of Priscilla belong to the first century. There is therefore some not inconsiderable reason for supposing that Glabrio may really have perished as a Christian.

But what are we to say of those many nobles who were charged with Judaism and godlessness? What especially of Flavius Clemens, the cousin, and Flavia Domitilla, the niece of Domitian?

It may be taken as certain that this illustrious pair were not tried in public and that Flavius Clemens was not executed in public, nor would the reasons for their condemnation be divulged. Noblemen were put to death within the walls of their own house; sometimes they were simply ordered to kill themselves, or given plainly to understand that they had better take this course. If the trial had been held before the Senate the crimes alleged would be known, but it may have been held before the Emperor himself, and in this case nothing would transpire but what the sovereign chose. Suetonius shows clearly that often men could only guess what it was that had

[1] D. Cass. lxvii. 14.

roused the suspicions of Domitian. He did not condescend to explain, and lamented the hard lot of princes, who never can explain. 'The world,' he said, 'will not believe that there has been a conspiracy unless the Emperor has been assassinated.'

It is therefore easy enough to suppose that in the course of the investigations to which the affair of the didrachma gave rise many distinguished personages were denounced as 'living a Jewish life though they did not call themselves Jews', that he may have tried these personages himself and discovered that they were Christians. He must have known perfectly well what a Christian was. But he would be horrified at discovering this despised and suspected belief among his nobility, and in his own house; he would certainly regard as traitors men who did not acknowledge him as 'their Lord and God'; at the same time he would be anxious to conceal what he could only regard as the disgrace of his own family. Who has at any time known the real reason for which an autocrat murdered a member of the blood royal?

Here again the archaeologists have greatly strengthened the traditional belief that Domitilla and, probably, also Flavius Clemens were Christians. Just outside Rome, on the Ardeatine Way, lay an estate known in ancient times as the Villa Amaranthiana, a name which still survives in its modern appellation, Tor Marancia. There is no doubt that it belonged to Flavia Domitilla, the wife of Flavius Clemens and granddaughter of Vespasian. It is certain also that Domitilla granted burying-places upon this land to her own servants and dependants. These sepulchres, of which we still possess the inscriptions, were above ground, but beneath the surface lies the catacomb of Domitilla. Here, in the second century, were interred a number of people whose names show that they were members or dependants of the Flavian house, but de Rossi and Wilpert hold that the earliest part of the cemetery belongs to the first century. These facts furnish, it must be admitted, very persuasive evidence for the belief that Flavia Domitilla was herself a Christian, and slighter, though still

appreciable, support for the belief that her husband Flavius Clemens shared her faith.

Even before the time of Domitilla's banishment the Church appears to have possessed these underground places of sepulture at Rome. The earliest Christian inscription found in the city is dated 71, and there appears to be no doubt that it originally stood in a catacomb. From the very first the Church would naturally and very strongly desire to possess its own cemeteries. The Christians invariably interred their dead because of their belief in the Resurrection, while throughout the first century and down to the middle of the second the pagans used cremation, and the arrangements proper to these two modes of sepulture are very different. Again, the Christian would not willingly lay his departed in the immediate vicinity of idolatrous and sometimes indecent pagan monuments. Further, it was the habit of both parties to celebrate recurrent acts of worship over the grave, and it was highly undesirable that Christians should come into contact with pagans at a time when feelings are so deeply stirred. But indeed the institution of family tombs is extremely ancient; the disciples of Jesus regarded themselves as one family, and, as they had worshipped through life in one church, so they would wish to lie side by side in death. Nothing could be less surprising or more inevitable.

Nor was there any legal obstacle to their carrying out this desire, if only they could by any means obtain possession of a plot of ground suitable for the purpose. Now it was quite a common thing for wealthy and generous persons to give or bequeath a place of sepulture with a limited intention. The extent of the piece of land and the purpose of the donor would be plainly expressed on a monument, or cippus, and phrases would be added such as 'for himself, his freedmen and freedwomen', or 'for himself and his own people', to show who had the right of burial in that spot.

The moment a corpse, or jar of ashes, was deposited in land so given it became a *locus religiosus*; it ceased, that is to say, to be the property of man, and passed into the possession of the gods below, the *Di Manes*. It could not be

sold or alienated, and no structure placed upon it could be altered without official permission. The law was vigorously enforced by the pontiffs and by the praetors, and any violation of the sepulchre itself, or of the will of the founder, was punished by heavy fines and infamy. By the end of the second century offences against the tomb had come to be treated as a capital crime.

Even during the first century the archaeologists believe that at least five Christian cemeteries, those of Lucina, Priscilla, Praetextatus, Agnes, and Domitilla, existed in Rome. We do not, indeed, find express mention of these burial-grounds till about the end of the second century, when we read that Zephyrinus set Callistus over the cemetery. About the same time Tertullian assures us of the existence of *areae Christianorum* in Africa.[1]

All these cemeteries remained perfectly safe under the guardianship of the heathen gods and the heathen magistrates. They must have been perfectly well known. They lay close to important high roads, their entrances were visible. They were constructed underground not for concealment, but merely for the sake of economy, a very pressing consideration in the case of a community which guaranteed decent interment even to the slave in a city where land was very costly. But the Roman criminal law, harsh as it was, did not pursue the dead. Pontius Pilate readily gave up the body of our Lord to Joseph of Arimathaea, and it was seldom that any attempt was made to deprive a Christian martyr of that kind of sepulture which was the custom of his Church. Sometimes, indeed, death was inflicted by fire, as was the case with St. Polycarp, and the object of this form of punishment may have been to deprive the victim of the hope of resurrection, but even then the charred remains were surrendered to the brethren. Only

[1] *Scap.* 3. These were superficial graveyards. The mob wanted them to be confiscated, but Hilarianus, the acting governor, would not allow them to be touched, though he was the official who pronounced sentence upon Perpetua and her companions. About this time, again, Gaius informs us of the 'trophies' of St. Peter and St. Paul on the Aurelian and Ostian Ways. These must have been not inconspicuous little buildings, such as the heathen called *memoriae*.

in one case do we read of a further outrage. The martyrs of Lyons were burned, and their ashes flung into the Rhone. But the Christian cemeteries were never confiscated except by Valerian and Diocletian, and a Christian corpse was never exhumed except by Julian the Apostate. For this action there was some little excuse: Babylas had been buried in the grove of Daphne with the express object of driving away Apollo from his temple. Nor did Julian offer any other indignity to the corpse, which was carried away by the Christians in a triumphal procession and laid to rest in the cathedral of Antioch.

These are very singular facts. We may say with truth that the Roman law was infinitely more tender towards property than towards human life. But we may say also that though at Rome open dissent against the established religion was a capital offence, and though the Christian might at any moment be forced into the position of an open dissenter, yet so long as he was not condemned he was never an outlaw, except during those brief periods in the third and fourth centuries when the Edicts of Valerian and Diocletian were in force. Though it must have been well known that he was a Christian, he was allowed to retain possession of all his civil rights: his grave, his church-house, and his public worship were not interfered with, he was comforted by his friends in prison, and, even if he was tried and condemned, his corpse was treated with respect.

CHAPTER VI

BARNABAS

In the latter years of the first century, and at the beginning of the second, we meet with three Christian writers who will most conveniently be taken together.

The first is Barnabas. Who he was and where he lived we do not know; the most likely guess is that he was an Alexandrian. Even as to his date critics are not quite agreed. But on this point he himself gives us indications. He mentions the destruction of Jerusalem, and it is therefore certain that his Epistle was not written before 70 A. D. But further, he regards this calamity as the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel. Let us look at his words: —

'For the prophet also saith this: Ten kingdoms shall bear rule upon the earth, and behind them shall arise a little king who shall bring low three of the kings under one. Likewise about the same thing Daniel saith: And I saw the Fourth Beast, evil and strong and fiercer than all the beasts of the earth, and how out of it arose ten horns, and of them a little side horn, and how he brought low three of the great horns under one.'

The fourth beast is the fourth Empire, the Roman; the ten horns are ten Caesars. The tenth Caesar reckoned from Julius is Vespasian, who is 'little' because of low origin, and a 'side horn' because neither by birth nor by adoption did he belong to the direct line of the patrician Emperors. The three 'great horns' whom he 'brought low under one' are Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. We may place the Epistle then with tolerable confidence between the fall of Jerusalem and the death of Vespasian, that is to say between 70 and 79, and perhaps not long after the earlier of these two dates. For the author appears to regard Vespasian as destined to be the last of the Emperors. Barnabas is a chiliast. The world, he believed, had already lasted for 6,000 years. Six great days had already passed away; the seventh was already dawning. Christ was coming to reign upon earth for a sabbath of 1,000 years, during which the Temple was

to be rebuilt by the servants of God's enemies, by the people whom Christ had redeemed from bondage to evil demons—not another house of stones, but a 'spiritual temple', that is to say a clean heart in which God can truly dwell. When this sabbath rest is over, the eighth day, on which Jesus rose, the eternal Sunday will appear, another world will begin, and all things be made new.

He directs his Epistle to some church unnamed—which he had visited shortly before. 'My sons and daughters,' he calls them, and he bids them 'Rejoice in the name of the Lord who loved us in peace'. 'Children of joy,' he calls them in another place. He himself had rejoiced in his brief communion with them; he thought their spirits blessed and noble, and could see nothing that they wanted except to add perfect knowledge to their faith. As we read the Epistle we learn that this knowledge is in the main Allegorism. What Barnabas desires to show is that the old scriptures by innumerable dark hints had prepared the Church for that very catastrophe which had occurred. The same thought had been present to the mind of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews not many years before, but there is a woful contrast in the intelligence of the two writers. The latter deals broadly and finely with the difference between the shadow and the substance, and leads us up to the great idea of progress, of a revelation which, though divine in all its stages, is always reaching forward to its final consummation in Christ. Barnabas writes like a converted Rabbi; he finds his knowledge in foolish juggling with words, letters, numbers, or in obscure Rabbinical traditions; he has no philosophy or history, and leaves the Law as great a puzzle as he found it. As a teacher he is of little interest. But as a witness to the beliefs of his time he is considerable. And his character, his humility, his amiability and cheerfulness, his genuine devotion to the Lord, more than atone for his ruggedness, his odd notions, and his lack of culture. Simple Barnabas, we may call him.

We ought to begin with what he says about the dignities and work of our Lord, especially in the fifth chapter.

Christ was 'Lord of all the world', and to Him God said at the Creation, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.' The prophets 'derived their grace of Him and prophesied of Him'. It was necessary that He should come in the flesh, for the Psalmist foretold that He should be crucified. The flesh was needful as a veil to His majesty; without that screen man could not have been saved by beholding Him, 'for they cannot bear to look with naked eyes even upon the sun, that sun which shall one day be quenched, which is the work of His hands.' Nor without a body could He have overcome death or assured us of the Resurrection, or healed us by His scars, or sanctified us by the remission of sins which is 'in the blood of His sprinkling'. He is also the future Judge. All this might be illustrated freely from the New Testament, and it is certain that Barnabas had read the Gospel of St. Matthew. But there is one curious point on which he attaches a very peculiar interpretation to the Gospel. David, says Barnabas, tells us himself that Christ was not his Son.[1] Tatian reproduced the same opinion in the second century, and it may be discovered even in the later *Didache*. He was Son of God, but not Son of David. We are to understand firstly, that Joseph, who sprang from the house of David, was not the father of Jesus, and that Mary was really of the tribe of Levi, as is perhaps implied in the Gospel of St. Luke. Partly, also, the idea may have been suggested by the desire to find a material basis for the High Priesthood of our Lord. In the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* Jesus is said to have been descended from both Levi and Judah, and thus to have been really both Priest and King.[2] Hegesippus tells us that James, the Lord's brother, enjoyed the priestly right of entrance into the Holy Place,[3] and Polycrates believed that even John the Apostle was a priest, and wore the *petalon*.[4] Thus was introduced finally a tortuous argument for the claim of the Christian hierarchy to be regarded as successor in title to the levitical.

[1] Ep. Barn. xii. 10, 11 *Δανὶδ λέγει αὐτὸν κύριον, καὶ υἱὸν οὐ λεγει.*

[2] e. g. Test. Sim. c. vii, ed. Charles, p. 25.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* ii. 23. Ib. iii. 31.

It is in connexion with our Lord that Barnabas plunges into his wildest allegorisms. Three of them deserve a passing notice. One possible etymology of the name Adam is that which makes it signify Earth. Hence our Lord, Adam's archetype, is the Good Land, and in this way is explained the use of milk and honey in baptism, a rite which already existed in the time of Barnabas. Again, the number of the armed servants of Abraham, three hundred and eighteen, is expressed in Greek by the letters T I H. Of these the first was taken to represent the Cross, the other two the initials of the name Jesus. This fancy struck root, and was applied to determine the rather uncertain number of the Fathers of Nicaea and to enhance the dignity of that great council. But Barnabas also develops with much detail the typical significance of the Scapegoat, displaying a curious acquaintance with Rabbinical writings or traditions otherwise quite unknown. It is a tempting and probable inference that he was himself a Jew, possibly a priest.

We see here the first essays of Christian allegorism, and further, on comparing the Epistle of Barnabas with the Epistle to the Hebrews, we discover a difference between two kinds of Allegorism, the Allegorism of Types and the Allegorism of Ideas. The former is Jewish, and, though not without a certain element of truth, was upon the whole arbitrary and childish. It was this mode of Allegorism which endured, and it wrought much mischief, not so much in doctrine, for in this direction it was used mainly to prove that which was sufficiently proved already, as in discipline. It was the main support of nearly the whole of the practical system of the mediaeval Church. The latter mode was Greek and philosophical, and this lay asleep from the time of Origen to the Reformation. It furnished Origen with some whims and some great truths; it taught him in particular the meaning of the words Priest, Sacrifice, and Altar. Origen's whims were rejected, not improperly; but with them also was condemned his protest against the judaizing of the Church. In the third century the tendency towards legalism was universal and irresistible. We are now to see the germs of this bias in Barnabas and his contemporaries.

What was the Law? This was the problem forced upon the Christian world by the fall of the Sacred City. It involves two questions. Is there any law at all for the Christian man? St. Paul held that there was not. 'He that is spiritual,' says the Apostle, 'judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man'; and again, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' Conscience is sovereign. Like the Stoics, St. Paul throws everything upon the man's own inner conviction; this is his guide, and he can have no other. Nor would he have admitted that this guide can mislead. He means not that the man is law unto himself, but that if he is a Christian he has within him that Spirit whose voice is law.

In this high mysticism the great Apostle had few followers, and even those few soon disappeared. The great body of the Church held with the Platonists that conscience itself is dormant or diseased; that it must be awakened by God, but that this awakening does not give knowledge though it does give docility; that therefore the convert needs training and discipline, which come to him from God not directly but indirectly through the society of believers. Hence at starting the Christian must do many things which are not of faith, because he cannot as yet see the reason for them. Thus he is still under law, under teachers and guides.

Here there arises the second question. What then are the contents of the Christian law? Were they such fragments of the Levitical law as had survived the destruction of the Temple? Were they the Covenant of Moses or the Covenant of Noah? Almost everybody would have answered this last question in the affirmative, for abstinence from blood was almost universal. But what more? Did the new Law include a priesthood, or sacrifice, and if so, in what sense? There was no doubt that it embraced any precepts which had been given by Christ Himself, the two sacraments, prayer, and the Decalogue. Did it include also fasting and celibacy? And above all, Did the power of legislation pass from Christ to the Church? and if so, to what extent?

Barnabas begins by declaring himself a follower of St. Paul. In a striking passage which reproduces the sense

if not the exact words of the Epistle to the Romans, he speaks of Abraham as justified not by obedience but by faith. Yet he says that the Gospel is the New Law of our Lord Jesus Christ,[1] a significant and ominous phrase derived rather from St. James than from St. Paul.

But when Barnabas comes to explain the contents of the New Law, he takes a broad and purely spiritual view. He is not indeed historical, but he is free from any touch of formalism. He condemns circumcision, fasting, bloody sacrifices, distinctions of meat, the sabbath—indeed all the ceremonial precepts of Judaism. He goes so far as to maintain that the Temple never ought to have been built; the way in which the Jews adored God in that house of stone was hardly better than the worship of Gentiles.[2] He asserts that the Law was never meant to be taken in its literal sense. Unclean animals mean unclean vices; when God forbade His people to eat the flesh of swine, they ought to have understood the words to mean that they were not to associate with swinish men.[3] It was 'an evil angel' who misled the Jews into thinking that such carnal precepts, especially that of circumcision, a rite practised by heathen Syrians and Arabs, could be of any value to the soul.[4] But he has also another argument, not perhaps quite consistent with this. He distinguishes between a first and a second law.[5] The first was the Ten Commandments written by God's finger on two tables of stone. But when Moses came down from Sinai and found the people worshipping the calf, he dashed down the tables and broke them in pieces. The Decalogue, the primal and eternal Law of God, was thus not given to Jews because they were not worthy, 'but the Lord Himself gave it to us.' It would follow that the second law, the law of Leviticus, was imposed upon the Jews, as Irenaeus held, by way of chastisement. Barnabas does not expressly add this. He has only given us the first half of this remarkable theory, the work of some unknown Jewish or Christian doctor of whom Irenaeus also had probably heard.

The Christian law is further expanded in the account of

[1] c. 1. [2] Ep. c. xvi. [3] chs. iv, ix. [4] Ib. [5] c. xiv.

the 'Two Ways' with which the Epistle closes.[1] The 'Two Ways' formed a useful and popular manual of Christian ethics, and were often republished apart from the Epistle to which they belong. They are almost entirely moral, and quite free from morbid introspection or asceticism or excessive scrupulosity. 'So far as thou art able,' says Barnabas, 'thou shalt be pure for thy soul's sake.'[2] The body is 'the fair vessel of the spirit', a phrase which embodies a Christian philosophy far above that of the Stoics and Platonists or the Fathers of the Desert.

Such is the 'knowledge' with which Barnabas comforted himself and his 'sons and daughters' over the thrilling news of the fall of Jerusalem. It is a remarkable thing that one who saw in this catastrophe a proof of the nearness of the day of judgement should have been able to write such an Epistle. He must have been a man of singularly calm, trustful, lenient, and sunny temper. Not to be a fanatic among circumstances so provocative of fanaticism is surely high merit.

In the Church of Barnabas there were clergy; he does not describe their orders or special functions. He insists upon the duty of attendance at public worship and of Christian sociability. 'Cleave not to the wicked; cleave to them that fear the Lord; day by day thou shalt seek the faces of the saints.' He lays little stress upon the word Church, but the idea is never absent from his mind. Baptism he dwells upon with emphasis; the Eucharist is not mentioned. The former is still regarded as much the greater sacrament of the two. Water and the Cross are the two emblems of Christianity. Lastly, we must notice that Barnabas knows of no prophets in the Church of his time. Or rather we should say he regards all Christians as prophets. 'God Himself prophesies in us and dwells in us.' The faithful become prophets in the same sense as Barnabas himself, able by 'knowledge' to understand the inner meaning of all Scripture, but there is no revelation beyond Scripture. Thus 'prophecy' is coming to mean exegesis as exegesis is coming to mean allegorism.

[1] chs. xviii–xxi. [2] c. xix.

CHAPTER VII

CLEMENT OF ROME

The next writer is Clement of Rome, who in the year 96 or 97 wrote an Epistle to the Church of Corinth, which was at the time in a state of great distraction; certain presbyters having been deposed from office in consequence of some violent party strife.

The Epistle is sent as from the Church of Rome, and the author was therefore beyond a doubt the leading member of that community. He does not give his own name, but ancient testimony assures us that it was Clement. He must have borne other names also, but we do not know what they were. Nor do we know who he was. There was a Clement who filled a prominent place in the Church of Philippi and is mentioned by St. Paul, and we have already had occasion to speak of Flavius Clemens, the cousin of Domitian. Attempts have been made to identify the writer of the Epistle with the former or make him a relative of the latter, but proof fails us in either case. It has been thought that at any rate he may have been the freedman of Flavius Clemens. But Clemens was quite a common slave-name. There is really nothing that we can say about him with confidence; the legend that he was banished by Trajan to the Crimea, and there flung into the sea with an iron anchor round his neck, is merely a fiction. He uses the Greek language; his style is not that of an educated man using his native tongue, still it is good Greek, and he was clearly a person of refinement and intelligence, who could express himself with ease and in a fine strain of imaginative eloquence.

Beneath the twelfth-century basilica of St. Clement at Rome lies buried in the ground another church which was of some antiquity in the time of St. Jerome. Beneath this again is an ancient house. It is possible, even

probable, that this is the very spot where St. Clement gathered his flock together and ministered the Word.

But the question of chief interest to the historian is not who Clement was but what he was. Tradition makes him the third or fourth Bishop of Rome. In what sense are we to understand this statement? Were there bishops in the first century, and if so, what was the nature of their functions?

In the fourth century there were in the Church two divergent theories of the origin of the Episcopate. The first is that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the second is that of St. Jerome.

Theodore starts from the observation that Bishop and Presbyter were originally equivalent terms, and asks how the former had come to designate a special and superior grade. He finds both the difficulty and the solution in the Pastoral Epistles. 'Those who now have the power of ordination, who are now called bishops, were not created bishops of one single church, but governed at that time whole provinces, and were called by the name of Apostles. Thus the blessed Paul set Timothy over all Asia and Titus over all Crete.'[1] Afterwards, when not only the towns but the rural districts became filled with believers, and 'the blessed Apostles passed away, those who were ordained after them to preside over the churches could not be equalled with those first, nor had they the same witness of miracles; nay, in many other things they seemed much weaker than they. Hence it seemed presumptuous to claim for themselves the name of Apostles. Hence they divided the names, and left to these (that is to say to the presbyters) the name of the presbytery, while the others were named bishops, those who now have power of ordination, so that they might know themselves to be in the fullest sense presidents of the churches.' According to Theodore, then, the thing Episcopacy existed from the first, though there has been a shifting of titles; the first bishops were specially consecrated by the Apostles and by the Apostles alone, and the provincial bishop comes in order of time before the suffragan. Theodore supports his theory by one fact and by one mis-

[1] *In Ep.* 1 *Tim.* iii. 8, vol. ii, ed. Swete, p. 118 foll.

interpretation of Scripture. The fact is that in the West and in some parts of the East bishops still governed not single cities but a considerable tract of country, and this was not improbably the ancient rule, for both Ignatius and Irenaeus appear to have been provincial bishops ruling over a group of churches in which there was no other bishop. The misinterpretation is to be found in Theodore's application of St. Paul's words to Timothy, 'Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' Theodore not only takes this passage as referring to the special ordination of Timothy as bishop or Apostle, which may or may not be correct, but affirms that presbytery here means not the presbyters properly so called but the Apostles. He conceives that Timothy was consecrated not by one but by several Apostles, just as in his own time a bishop was consecrated not by one but by several bishops. This is certainly not the meaning of St. Paul.

This may be called the accepted view, but it seems clear that Theodore, in spite of his antiquity, knew no more of the real history of the matter than we do ourselves. His opinion is merely an inference, not in all points a correct inference, from the words of Scripture combined with the usage of his own time. The one fact to which he appeals may be significant, but does not touch the essential point. The essential point is whether the Apostles by a distinct act of consecration instituted a distinct class of ecclesiastical officers whom they intended to step into their own places and wield their own authority.

St. Jerome says that they did not. He also starts with the observation that originally bishop and presbyter were convertible titles.

'Afterwards one was elected and set over the others, as a safeguard against divisions, lest individuals following their own selfish interests should burst asunder the Church of Christ. For at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist to that of Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the priests always elected one of their own number, placed him in a higher degree and called him bishop; just as if our army should make an emperor or deacons elect one of themselves and call him archdeacon.' [1]

[1] *Ep. cxlvi ad Evang.* i. 1076, ed. Vell.

Again:—

'The Presbyter, therefore, is the same as the Bishop, and until parties arose in religion by the prompting of the devil, so that it was said in the communities, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, the churches were governed by the common council of the priests. But when each teacher began to think that those whom he had baptised were his own, not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the world that one of the priests should be elected and set over the others, and that on him should rest the general supervision of the Church, so that the seeds of division might be destroyed. . . . As therefore the priests know that by the custom of the Church they are set under him who is put over them, so let bishops know that rather by custom than by the Lord's arrangement are they greater than priests.'[1]

According to Jerome, therefore, Episcopacy was not directly instituted by our Lord, and it is clearly implied in his words that it was not directly instituted by the Apostles. It rests upon the 'custom of the Church', and was devised by the Church for a particular object—the maintenance of unity. Jerome also asserts that in Alexandria down to the third century the bishop was elected, placed in office, and invested with his title by the priests.[2] We can hardly doubt him to mean that the Bishop of Alexandria received from the priests all that was necessary for the discharge of his functions, including such consecration as was then in use. This statement of fact has been much disputed, but is not without serious corroboration. If it is not true, it is evident that we have here again nothing but Jerome's own inference from the original identity of the titles of bishop and priest.

Here, then, we have two very different theories of the Episcopate, both held by eminent churchmen of the fourth century. It will now be time to return to Clement and see what we really know about him.

We may turn first to Hermas, a contemporary writer. Hermas tells us that he was ordered by the Lady, who personified the Church, to make two copies of his Second Vision.

[1] *Comm. in Tit. i.* 5, *Opp.* t. vii, p. 694. [2] *Loc. cit.*

'Thou shalt send one to Clement and one to Grapte. Clement then shall send it to the foreign cities, for this is his duty; while Grapte shall instruct the widows and orphans. But thou shalt read it to this city along with the elders that preside over the church.'[1]

Here Clement is mentioned as the officer whose duty it is to manage all communications between Rome and other churches. This does in fact appear to have been one of his functions, and so we find him writing the Epistle that bears his name to the Church of Corinth. But it was also in later times one special function of the bishop, who was the official correspondent of the Church over which he presided.

The next passage is from Clement himself:—

'The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in due order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and confirmed in the Word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come. So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe.'[2]

Here Clement uses the name bishop as equivalent to priest, and this is no doubt his regular use. He recognizes, that is to say, an Apostolical Succession of priests and deacons, but not of bishops, and in this is in complete agreement with Jerome. There is, however, another passage:—

'They therefore that make their offerings at the appointed season are acceptable and blessed; for while they follow the institutions of the Master they cannot go wrong. For unto the high priest his proper services have been assigned and to the priests their proper office is appointed, and unto the Levites their proper ministration is laid. The layman is bound by the layman's ordinances. Let each of you, brethren, in his own order give thanks unto God, maintaining a good conscience, and not transgressing the appointed rule of His service, but acting with all seemliness.'[3]

[1] Vis. II. iv. 3. [2] Ep. Clem. c. xlii. [3] Ib. c. xl, xli; but cf. c. xliv.

These words must surely imply that there was in the Church of Rome something corresponding to the hierarchy of the Jews. There must have been in particular something analogous to the difference between high priest and priest. Yet it seems certain that Clement did not restrict the name of bishop to the chief Christian officer, for he repeatedly bestows it upon those who were merely priests. The difficulty would be adequately solved if we suppose that the difference between high priest and priest which Clement has in his mind was not that between a modern bishop and his priests, but that between a modern dean and his canons, if, that is to say, it was a distinction not of consecration but of privilege and jurisdiction. At the Church of Nitria, in Egypt, there was in the fourth century a college of eight priests, of whom only one was allowed to officiate. This senior priest was in fact what we should call a provost, and provost is in fact a title very frequently given to the bishop. It is possible that this Nitrian arrangement may have prevailed originally in all churches where there was a college of priests. Such a permanent president might easily develop noiselessly and rapidly into the monarchical bishop, in some districts no doubt sooner than in others. Three steps would mark the development—the final separation of the title bishop from the title priest, the introduction of a special service of consecration for the bishop, and the belief that a bishop could only be created by his peers. None of these would make any real difference in the position of the provost, and none would cause any great shock.

The whole question has been, and will continue to be, eagerly disputed. But it may certainly be held that the Epistle of Clement confirms the view of Jerome and makes against that of Theodore, and that Clement was rather provost than bishop of the Church of Rome. It is not certain what was his exact place in the order of succession. One tradition places him first after the Apostles, another third, another fourth. The second is the best attested, but of his supposed predecessors Linus and Cletus (or Anencletus) we have no historical knowledge.

The occasion of Clement's Epistle has already been

noticed. The Church of Corinth was still possessed of the democratic spirit which characterized it in the time of St. Paul. They had fallen into line with the rest of Christendom and an order of clergy had been appointed, but fresh dissensions had broken out and some or all of their officers had been deposed. It is partly to be regretted that Clement does not enter into details; by a few words he would have shown us the truth about one of the most disputed passages in ecclesiastical history. Yet he gives us to understand one important point. The Corinthian dispute turned not upon principles but upon persons. There was no objection to presbyteral government; what the malcontents desired was to turn out certain priests and put others in their places. His Epistle is a fine exhortation to Unity. This great grace can only be maintained by due submission to the hierarchy, who, having been appointed by the Apostles or their successors with the consent of the Church, cannot justly be thrust out of their office if they have 'ministered unblameably to the flock of Christ in lowliness of mind, peacefully, and with all modesty, and for a long time have borne a good repute with all'. Clement evidently considers that the ejected clergy were not to blame, and exhorts the authors of the sedition to 'submit themselves unto the presbyters and receive chastisement unto repentance'. Throughout the Epistle the strongest emphasis is laid upon the virtue of obedience. Clement sees in the Christian hierarchy an embodiment of the eternal and all-pervading will of God, which is Law and Order, and governs not the Church only, but the earth, the heavens, and the sea. The grand passage in which he develops this thought[1] may have suggested to Richard Hooker the idea which that great divine so powerfully expounded in the first book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. It is highly noticeable also that Clement is the first Christian writer to draw an analogy between the Christian priest and deacon and the Jewish cohen and Levite. He labours to show that there is a direct line of succession between the hierarchy of the Old and that of the New Testament. 'For

[1] c. xx.

of Jacob are all the priests and Levites who minister unto the altar of God; of him is the Lord Jesus as concerning the flesh'[1]; thus the Saviour is both Priest and King as heir according to the flesh of him who was father both of Levi and of Judah. Further, Clement is the first to apply to the Christian priest the title *hiereus* because by the will of God he has to make 'offerings' at fixed times and seasons.[2] To Barnabas the priest is primarily one who 'speaks the word of the Lord' and ought to be listened to. To Clement he is primarily one who offers a gift which cannot be offered by others, and who ought therefore to be obeyed. This is new language pointing to a new direction of thought, and both language and thought are derived, not from the New Testament, but from the Old. Thus at Rome by the end of the first century we find ourselves fairly launched upon the stream of ecclesiastical development. Ecclesiastical development is in one aspect the articulation of the contents of this new sense of the word priest; in another, the corresponding articulation of the word faith. As to the last point, it cannot be said that Clement's teaching is novel; it certainly has its roots in the New Testament, but in the Epistle to the Hebrews, or in the Epistle of St. James, not in St. Paul. Thus, to take the crucial passage, Clement writes, 'Wherefore was our father Abraham blessed? Was it not because he wrought righteousness and truth through faith?'[3] Faith is in his view such a conviction as will produce obedience to the instructions of the priest. It is not necessary for us to ask here whether he is right or wrong; all that need be said is that in those two correlative ideas, priest and faith, as they are understood by Clement, lies enfolded the whole system of the mediaeval Church.

For Clement's theology we may content ourselves with a bare catena of passages. The Father, the Most High and Almighty, is the great Creator and Sovereign (despot) of all things. He is pitiful in all things, and ready to do good, and hath compassion on them that fear Him. The Son is the Sceptre of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the High Priest of our offerings, the Guardian and Helper of our

[1] c. xxxii. [2] c. xl. [3] c. xxxi; cf. c. x.

weakness; the true and only Lord. Clement quotes of Him the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is One God, One Christ, one spirit of Grace, who all 'live'. By faith in Christ we are justified, and our ransom is the Blood of Christ that was given for us.

Here we have a sketch of the official theology of the Church of Rome at the end of the first century.

The only book of the New Testament which Clement actually quotes by name is the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Bishop Lightfoot credits him with actual citations from the three synoptical Gospels, Acts, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, and the Apocalypse, but he uses words and phrases which may show a much wider acquaintance with the canonical writings.

No reader of the Epistle can fail to be struck by the many fine passages which it contains. One on the Divine Law has already been noticed. Another may have suggested to Bishop Pearson his admirable description of the Annual Resurrection. But noblest of all is the sublime prayer which is inserted towards the close, and forms a solemn climax to this powerful and affecting piece of exhortation. Beginning with praise and adoration, it goes on to make intercession for all sorts and conditions of men, for all sufferers, and for all rulers and governors. It may not improbably be the very prayer that St. Clement used when he celebrated the Liturgy. Not that he would always employ these precise words. The Liturgy, though it had already perhaps fallen into a fixed scheme, was not reduced fully into a written form until long after this time. Even in the third century a bishop who possesses the gift of praying from the heart is exhorted not to suffer it to lie idle. But words like these, embodying the same thoughts in much the same sequence, Clement was in the habit of pouring forth when he led the worship of his people, probably in that ancient house which lies beneath his modern church. There Flavia Domitilla and her husband may have knelt and listened; there, too, Hermas the prophet may have recounted after service his visions to the priests.

CHAPTER VIII

HERMAS

Hermas the prophet speaks of Clement as presiding in his time over the Church of Rome. There is no reason to doubt that he is telling us the simple truth, or that the Clement whom he mentions is that Clement whose Epistle we have just been considering. His statement is confirmed by the fact that he refers to a persecution which had recently caused trouble in Rome, and one leading motive of the *Pastor* is to supply an answer to the question how the Church ought to deal with the lapsed. The persecution can hardly be other than that of Domitian.

It is true that the *Muratorian Fragment*, an ancient Latin Canon, the archetype of which may be as old as the second century, tells us that Hermas wrote the *Pastor* 'quite recently', while his brother Pius was Bishop of Rome. But this statement is more than doubtful. Hermas was a slave who had been brought to Rome and sold there as a child by the person who had reared him. He had been exposed by his parents and picked up out of the road by one of those persons who made a trade of collecting such waifs. Where he was born he does not say, but the cast of his mind does not strike the reader as either Italian or Greek; the most probable guess is that he came from the East. If he had any brothers, it is next to impossible that it should have been known who or what or where they were. A Phrygian or Syrian foundling had no more home or belongings than a piece of seaweed [1].

The date given by the *Fragment*—the reign of Pope Pius may be loosely placed between 139 and 156—is not quite impossible. We might suppose that Hermas began to prophesy in the lifetime of Clement, and that his book was not published in its complete form until 140. But it is very

[1] *θρεπτός* is the technical term for a child which had been exposed, picked up, and reared as a slave. See Pliny, *Epp.* 71, 72. He cannot have had a brother.

improbable. He speaks of himself in his first vision as a middle-aged man with a grown-up family, and it is difficult to suppose that his prophetic activity endured for thirty or forty years more. A certain interval must be allowed for the amendment which followed the preaching of Hermas, and in the Ninth Similitude, which in its main features repeats the Third Vision, we are told that the building of the Tower is suspended for a time ; in other words, the end of the world is no longer regarded as immediately impending. We may suppose that three or four years had elapsed. But the real point upon which critics differ is whether the account which the prophet gives of himself is truth or fiction. If it is true, there can be little doubt that the author of the *Fragment* had made a mistake. And why should Hermas not have told the truth ? Everybody must have known who he was. And his self-drawn portrait, though quite lifelike, is by no means flattering.

Hermas is indeed a very singular personage. Apparently he had been suspected of undue familiarity with his former mistress, Rhoda, and certain touches in his book show that he felt that susceptibility to feminine influences which brought many of the Gnostics and many members of the orthodox Church into dangerous relations with enthusiastic women. He could not control his wife and children, and had allowed them to bring discredit upon his name and even to cause him pecuniary embarrassment. When he tells us of himself that he 'had never spoken the truth in his life',[1] we may look upon the words as a naïve exaggeration. But he can hardly be regarded as a moral hero. He was not intelligent and he was not well educated, and if he possessed any close acquaintance with Jewish or Christian Scriptures he certainly does not display it. If he was really brother to a bishop he must have been a trial to his relation. He cannot have possessed much authority in the Church, or his prophetic gift would have marked him out for the priesthood. He does not venture to say that he knew Clement, but sends him his book as though he were disinclined to approach him in person. Strange, solitary, weak, ignorant,

[1] Mand. iii.

ecstatic, inspired perhaps but not inspiring, despised as ineffective, yet claiming the power to speak almost as a master by right of his singular endowment—he could not have drawn this picture of himself unless it were true. His fate has been as unequal as his character. His book all but found a place in the Canon, but Tertullian, after he became a Montanist, could not believe that Hermas was a real prophet, and the Church at large could never quite satisfy itself that the *Pastor* was orthodox.

Nevertheless Hermas has great historical significance. He claims to be a prophet, and he will show us, therefore, what a prophet was. Again, the contents of his prophecy will set before us the thought that was in the mind of the Roman Church in his time, all the better because he was not by any means a man of original mind.

What, then, was the Prophet?

'In the first place,' says Hermas, 'he that hath the Spirit which is from above, is gentle and tranquil and humble-minded, and abstaineth from all wickedness and vain desire of this present world, and holdeth himself inferior to all men, and giveth no answer to any man when inquired of, nor speaketh in solitude (for neither doth the Holy Spirit speak when a man wisheth him to speak); but the man speaketh then when God wisheth him to speak. When, then, the man who hath the divine Spirit cometh into an assembly of righteous men who have faith in a divine Spirit, and intercession is made to God by the gathering of those men, then the angel of the prophetic spirit who is attached to him filleth the man, and the man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaketh to the multitude according as the Lord willeth.'[1]

The primitive Christians must have been sorely tempted to use the prophet as a substitute for the heathen Chaldean or soothsayer, going to him with money in their hands and requiring from him horoscopes, or answers to questions about their health, their journeys, their lost slaves, their dead friends. This abuse is here denounced. Those who wish to hear the oracle of God must expect only that message which the Spirit is pleased to vouchsafe. In particular, they must not imagine that the divine gift can be bought. Money

[1] Mand. xi. 8, 9.

they must not offer and the seer must not accept. Further, the prophet does not speak in church or in service-time, but in a special meeting of devout men. The assembled company unite in prayer for an outpouring of revelation; the Spirit, if He be so pleased, comes down upon His chosen vessel, the prophet falls into a trance and speaks what the Spirit wills. This was the usual method of Christian prophecy as it is described for us in the Book of Acts, and a hundred years later Tertullian gives us substantially the same account.

There is another remarkable passage. In the Third Vision the Church appears to Hermas as an aged lady seated upon a bench,—

'and on the bench there lay a linen cushion, and on the cushion was spread a coverlet of fine linen of flax.'

She bids Hermas sit down upon the bench by her side. He replies, 'Lady, let the priests sit down first. Do as I bid thee, saith she; sit down. When then I wanted to sit down on the right side, she would not allow me, but beckoned me with her hand that I should sit on the left side. As then I was musing thereon, and was sad because she would not permit me to sit on the right side, she saith unto me, Art thou sad, Hermas? The place on the right side is for others, even for those who have been already well pleasing to God, and have suffered for the Name's sake.'

It seems clear that Hermas is here claiming a seat upon the linen-covered bench behind the altar, which was the official place of the bishop and priests. It is clear also that the Church of Rome did not allow this claim. Again, it is clear that Hermas was not aware that the government of the Church had ever been otherwise arranged than it was in his day. Neither he nor Barnabas has any knowledge of what has been called 'the charismatic ministry'. Nor is any clear trace of such a ministry to be found in the first century except in the Epistles to the Corinthians. Even at Corinth the presbyteral constitution was by this time established.

We cannot say that it was established there when St. Paul sent his Epistles to Corinth. There is no trace in these Epistles of the activity, or even of the existence, of priests. At the same time the Church was in a state of extreme

disorder, moral, liturgical, and doctrinal. Was it that the Church of Corinth had not yet received its destined organization? Was it that they had driven out their priests? Was it that the Apostle had deliberately tried there the experiment of a democratic fraternity? There were members of that Church who were strongly hostile to St. Paul; there were some who called themselves disciples of Cephas. Were there two distinct churches in the city, one presbyteral, the other democratic? It is impossible to answer these questions satisfactorily. We know that except in the Pastoral Epistles, and except by a couple of words in the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul nowhere in his own writings recognizes the existence of commissioned officers in the Church, and that there was for long a coolness between him and the other Apostles, arising out of the dispute about Law, but necessarily involving the question of ecclesiastical government. It may be that for a time, and in certain churches where his influence was strong, St. Paul purposely left the conduct of affairs in the hands of the people themselves, and did not choose to establish a hierarchy. If so, the experiment failed, like the earlier experiment of socialism in the Church of Jerusalem; failed so completely that it vanished like smoke and left no trace behind. At the end of the first century nobody knows anything about a charismatic ministry.[1] The prophet remains here and there, a much venerated but solitary personage. Such an outburst of fanaticism as occurred at Corinth has never been witnessed since except at long intervals, in particular districts, and under stress of widespread excitement. We cannot judge these extravagances favourably, or build a theory upon them, or regret their disappearance.

We usually associate the prophet with a free and spiritual morality, and contrast him with the lawyer and Pharisee, who live by forms and precepts. It is therefore a remarkable fact that Hermas is more legal, more Jewish we may say, than any other of the group of writers to which he belongs. The figure which fills his mind is not that of Jesus; the name of Jesus does not occur in his book, and

[1] Unless, of course, the *Didache* be regarded as a first-century document.

the Son of God appears only incidentally as a distant and formidable judge; but that of John the Baptist, Church discipline, the need, the conditions, the method of penitence—this is his theme from first to last. In the first section of his work he tells us how the Church came to him in the guise of an aged and weary woman. She warns him of his own faults, of the faults of his brethren, of the nearness of the end, and of the pressing need of amendment before that day arrives. At each successive visit she appears to him as younger, fairer, and more gladsome, as she finds that her salutary admonitions are bearing fruit. In the Fourth Vision she comes to meet him as 'a virgin arrayed as if she were going forth from a bridechamber, all in white and with white sa dals, veiled up to her forehead, and her head-covering consisted of a turban and her hair was white'. Finally she departs, but sends another teacher in her place. 'As I prayed in the house and sat on the couch,' says Hermas, 'there entered a man glorious in his visage, in the garb of a shepherd, with a white skin wrapped about him, and with a wallet on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. And he saluted me and I saluted him in return.' But the visitor is not the Good Shepherd. Dear as was that type of the Saviour to the primitive Christians who sleep in the catacombs, it does not appeal to Hermas. His shepherd is the angel of repentance, and from him the whole book receives its name. The shepherd delivers to Hermas twelve Mandates or instructions on belief in the one God and on the rules of the Christian life, and certain Similitudes or Parables which repeat in slightly varied form the lessons of the Visions and Mandates.

Let us take as a sample the Third Vision, which is indeed the central point of the whole collection.

'Look then,' says the Lady, 'dost thou not see in front of thee a great Tower being builded upon the waters of glistening square stones? Now the Tower was being builded four-square by the six young men that came with her. And countless other men were bringing stones, some of them from the deep and others from the land, and were handing them to the six young men. And they took them and builded. The stones that were dragged from the deep they placed in

every case, just as they were, into the building, for they had been shaped, and they fitted in their joining with the other stones; and they adhered so closely one with another that their joining could not possibly be detected; and the building of the Tower appeared as if it had been built of one stone. But of the other stones which were brought from the dry land, some they threw away and some they put into the building, and others they broke in pieces and threw to a distance from the Tower. Now many other stones were lying round the Tower, and they did not use them for the building; for some of them were mildewed, and others had cracks in them, and others were too short, and others were white and round and did not fit into the building. And I saw other stones thrown to a distance from the Tower, and coming to the way, and yet not staying in the way, but rolling to where there was no way; and others falling into the fire and burning there; and others falling near the water and yet not able to roll into the water, although they desired to roll and to come to the water.'

The Tower is the Church, which is being built upon the waters of baptism. The six builders are the six archangels; the men who hand the stones to them are angels of lower degree. The stones brought from the deep are the martyrs; the other stones which fit perfectly in their places are clergy, apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons, of whom some have already fallen on sleep, others are still living. The stones from the dry land are the multitude of professing Christians. Some are penitent; these, with a little hewing, can be set in the courses; others desire to repent, but have not yet made amends. If they repent while the Tower is building they will be fixed in their places. 'But if the building shall be finished, they have no more any place, but shall be castaways. This privilege only they have, that they lie near the Tower.' The other stones are sons of lawlessness, hypocrites, they that knew the truth but did not abide in it, they that are not at peace among themselves, rich men who deny their Lord in time of persecution by reason of their riches, double-hearted men who think they can find a better way, men who fall into the fire of lust and are burned, men who seek for baptism but find the Christian life too hard. All these may repent, 'but they cannot be fitted into this Tower. Yet they shall

be fitted into another place much more humble; but not until they have undergone torments, and have fulfilled the days of their sins.'

There were teachers in the Church of Rome who insisted that those who after baptism had fallen into mortal sin, by which is meant specially apostasy or sexual impurity, could never be readmitted into the Church. Hermas himself regarded apostasy combined with delation, the offence of one who not only denied Christ but also betrayed his fellow believers, as unforgivable. For all other sinners, even for the apostate and the adulterer, he held that One Repentance was allowed. Only one, because a new persecution was coming soon which would bring with it the end of the world and the completion of the Tower. After that there is no more expectation of mercy. And grave offenders, even though they repented, could never attain to what was afterwards called the Beatific Vision. After long purgatorial suffering they might be admitted to one of the outer circles of heaven; they might be saved, but not crowned. If we ask what sin is, the prophet replies that it is self-indulgence; if we ask what self-indulgence is, he replies that it includes every action that a man does with pleasure; if we ask what is the appointed cure for the love of pleasure, he tells us that it is torment, measured out by a strict rule, thirty days of torment for each hour of pleasure.

Where did Hermas learn all this? Certainly not from the New Testament. Yet there are two or three dark verses in the New Testament which speak of the sin that hath no forgiveness. Hermas and his contemporaries have been brooding upon these, and labouring to interpret them with the help perhaps of Jewish apocalypses. They have drawn a sharp distinction between sins before and after baptism. The former, however enormous, are freely forgiven; the latter are never forgiven freely, never without punishment in this world or the next, perhaps are never forgiven at all. The extreme rigorists completely ignored the denial of St. Peter, but even Hermas was rigorous enough.

In these obscure speculations we find the germs of Asceticism, of Casuistry, of the sacrament of Penance, of

the doctrine of Purgatory, and of the later schisms of Montanism and of Novatianism. We see also in Hermas the cause of these developments. The Church which he describes is by no means separate from the world; in every direction it melts away by easy gradations into the heathen society by which it is surrounded. There were many Christians who mixed very freely with the pagans, in their business, in their pleasures; many who more or less regularly attended the services of the Church, but could not make up their minds to receive baptism; many who thought that the Christian way was good, but that other ways led to very much the same goal. We cannot be surprised at this. It was impossible for the brotherhood to dig an impassable gulf between themselves and their neighbours. They dealt at the same shops; their children attended the same schools; there were mixed marriages; they met in social intercourse; they could not as a body decline to fulfil their civic duties; they were extremely anxious to gain converts, and therefore to explain and justify their position. Like all subsequent churches, the sub-apostolic included the enthusiast, the devout, the docile, the doubter, the regular or irregular conformist, the time-server, the moral weakling, the hypocrite. Human nature was no doubt the same then as now. The really remarkable thing is the general tolerance and good humour of the heathen. Owing to the free intercourse between the two camps it must have been perfectly well understood who were Christians and who were not; many of their peculiar habits were quite obvious; many of their doctrines must have been fairly well known. Yet upon the whole there was but little hostility. Naturally there were some Christians who insisted upon the necessity of closing the ranks and driving out all but thoroughgoing believers; others took a more moderate view, but one still harsh; others remembered the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and durst not quench the smoking flax. This diversity of opinion makes itself strongly felt in the following history, especially in times of persecution.

One more passage deserves notice as containing the first

draft of another belief which in later times produced considerable results. In the Fifth Similitude we have a new version of one of our Lord's parables. A slave is sent into the Vineyard with a definite command to fence it but to do nothing else. He easily accomplishes this task and, finding that there is still time, proceeds to dig the soil and to cleanse it of weeds. For this he is highly commended by the Master and made fellow heir with the Master's Son. The parable is explained by the Shepherd:—

'Keep the commandments of the Lord, he says, and thou shalt be well pleasing to God, and shalt be enrolled among the number of those who keep His commandments. But if thou do any good thing outside the commandments of God thou shalt win for thyself more exceeding glory, and shalt be more glorious in the sight of God than thou wouldest otherwise have been.'

The special service which is 'outside the commandment' and yet 'very good' is Fasting.

Hermas agrees with Barnabas that Christianity is a law, and that this law does not include the duty of fasting. But he considers that the law is imperfect, that it contains only a bare minimum of moral directions, that he who would please his Master must do in addition what he has not been commanded, nay, must do what he has been forbidden to do.

Where did Hermas find this notion? Not in the New Testament. Strange that this obscure and not very attractive writer should have set in motion a chain of causes that finally brought Luther into the field and broke up the unity of the Western Church.

As regards the hierarchy, Hermas speaks in the Second Vision of priests, of widows and orphans governed by a lady superior, and names Clement apart from and apparently as superior to them all. In the Third Vision we find apostles, bishops, teachers, deacons. In the Ninth Similitude we have ten righteous men of the first generation, twenty-five of the second, and thirty-five prophets and ministers of God. These are the saints of the Old Testament; they were instructed and baptized by the forty

apostles and teachers who were sent down to them in Hades by the Son of God. By the apostles Hermas appears to mean the Twelve; by teachers the first evangelists. It is at best extremely doubtful whether he recognized men bearing the distinctive title of teacher in his own church. Further, we read here again of bishops and deacons. By the bishop we are to understand the priest-bishop, as in Clement.

There has been much discussion as to the exact meaning of Hermas; it may therefore be as well to observe that as he lived in the same city as Clement, and, if not precisely at the same time, then a little later, the hierarchy described by Hermas can hardly be less developed than that described by Clement. In Clement's epistle the priest-bishops and deacons already appear as divinely appointed clergy in the full sense of that word, and there is no reason to think that Hermas took any other view.

The theology of Hermas has been the subject of much debate, and it must be owned that the uncertainty is the fault of the writer himself. Hermas must have been acquainted with the Bible, but for some reason or another he never quotes directly from any book of the Old or New Testament. The only document which he cites by name is the prophecy of Eldad and Modad, and the form in which his creed is expressed is borrowed almost entirely from Jewish writings of the same character.

He does not mention the Eucharist. The sacrament of Baptism, on the other hand, is of such power and necessity that even the saints of the Old Testament could not enter the kingdom of heaven until they had received 'the seal' in Hades. It is called Baptism 'into the Name of the Lord', and 'Lord' throughout the *Shepherd* seems to be used in its ancient Hebrew sense. Yet the seal carries with it also the Name of the Son of God. Two Names at any rate must have been employed in the administration of the sacrament, and there is no need for supposing that the third was not also used. 'Church' is a word of the greatest significance in the eyes of Hermas. From the Church he receives his visions; she sends to him the angel of repen-

tance; those who are not built into her have no place in the kingdom. 'She was created before all things; and for her sake the world was framed.' In the Eighth Similitude the great tree which overshadows the whole earth is identified with the Law of God, and again the Law of God with the Son of God.

But Hermas does not employ the word Jesus, or Christ, or Scripture, or Jew, or Christian. He nowhere speaks of a single incident in our Lord's life, nor of His Death, nor of the Cross; the Resurrection is barely alluded to. The main article in the prophet's creed is the Return to judgement. This, and the urgent need for preparation by repentance and good works, by fasting, and by readiness to suffer for the Name, are the thoughts that fill his mind.

Who is the Son of God? We see Him only in dim, occasional, terrible glimpses behind the persons of the angels. Four angels carry in the chair or bench upon which Lady Church is seated, but Hermas cannot see their faces because they are turned away; they are the four cherubim who bear the throne of God. Six angels build the Tower; they are the Archangels, the First Created, the Watchers of Enoch. Chief of them is Michael, the special guardian of the people of God. In the Ninth Similitude Hermas sees the six builders who come to inspect the building; in their midst is a seventh, 'a man of such lofty stature that he overtopped the Tower. And the six men who superintended the building walked with him on the right hand and on the left, and all they that worked at the building were with him, and many other glorious attendants round him. And the virgins that watched the Tower ran up and kissed him, and they began to walk by his side round the Tower. And that man inspected the building so carefully that he felt each single stone; and he held a rod in his hand and struck each single stone that was built in.' He is the Lord of the Tower, the Son of God; and even of the six glorious angels 'not one shall enter in unto God without Him; whosoever shall not receive His Name shall not enter into the kingdom of God'. He is the Church, the Law, the Rock, the Gate. He is 'older than all His creation, so that He became the Father's adviser in His creation'.

'He was made manifest in the last days of the consummation.' He 'cleansed the sins of His people by labouring much and enduring many toils. He showed them the paths of life, giving them the law which He received from His Father.' 'Thou seest, he says, that He is Himself Lord of the people, having received all power from His Father.' The words which follow these in the Fifth Similitude have been taken to mean that the Son of God was 'chosen as a partner with the Holy Spirit' because of His good behaviour in the flesh, but they refer not to the Son but to the servant, that is to say to the believer.

The Son of God, then, according to Hermas, was agent of creation, bears the Name, was made 'manifest' in the flesh, is Saviour of angels, and Saviour by His labours and toils of men, is the Law and the Church, builds the Church by the instrumentality of angels, will return as Judge. This we may say is the theology of Hermas. The Holy Spirit is hardly recognized as distinct from the Son; the Father is hidden behind the Son, as the Son is almost hidden behind the angels.

If we attempt to compare the belief of Hermas with that of Barnabas or that of Clement we may easily go wrong, for not one of the three has given us more than a partial glimpse of his mind. But Hermas strikes us as very different from the other two, not so much in his points as in his estimate of values, in his way of seeing and feeling. The difference appears to be due to a strong Jewish infusion which affects the very substance of his thought. It may be that he was a Jew himself, it may be merely that he had lived in the Roman Ghetto and saturated himself with books and ideas that were current there. He lies rather outside the direct line of ecclesiastical traditions. But many of his most peculiar and least pleasing ideas were destined to reappear and play a considerable part in the making of the Church. The bent of the later Church was in fact impressed upon it not by powerful or lucid thinkers, not by the great doctors, only in part by great organizing bishops. The movement came rather from obscure and uneducated enthusiasts of much the same type as Hermas.

CHAPTER IX

TRAJAN

Domitian was the last surviving member of the Flavian house, and with him perished the dynasty. The aristocracy hated him and pursued his memory with execration, for he had trampled the Augustan constitutionalism under his feet; his rule had been a pure despotism enforced by the most ruthless severity. They had good reason for regarding him with unqualified detestation. But the provinces under his rule were admirably governed, and the army was sincerely attached to him because he maintained good discipline and increased their scanty pay.

The Senate were not taken by surprise; indeed, the assassination of Domitian was probably their work, and they eagerly seized the opportunity of conferring the purple on a man of their own choice. There was no pretender to the vacant throne, and no opposition was offered to the accession of Nerva. He came of a stock of distinguished lawyers, and possessed every claim to esteem. He was cultivated, clement, and humane; unfortunately he was also aged, infirm, and a civilian. He put a stop to the religious persecution of Domitian. Those who were under trial for impiety he dismissed; he recalled the exiles and forbade any further accusations of impiety or Judaism. It is a great misfortune that Dion Cassius did not explain precisely what he meant by this important statement, but the words can hardly mean less than that Nerva refused to allow any religious persecutions at all. But it soon became evident that this excellent man was not strong enough to hold the reins. He endeavoured to screen the murderers of Domitian, but was compelled to give them up to the vengeance of the guard, after a violent tumult in which he nearly lost his own life. There was a conspiracy against him headed by Calpurnius Crassus,

a member of the old nobility, and the Dacian war was on the point of breaking out again. Finding himself unable to cope with the difficulties of his position, the old Emperor determined to provide himself with a coadjutor and successor, and for this purpose adopted as his son the most capable soldier of the time, Marcus Ulpius Trajanus, who was at the time general in command of the province of Upper Germany. Soon afterwards he died, on January 25, A.D. 98, after a short and troubled reign of little more than a year. It is worthy of notice that in Nerva the Senate elected a blameless gentleman of the conservative official type, who would reign but not govern. Nerva chose the best and strongest man that he could find. Trajan was not in any way related to him. Earlier and later imperial adoptions were family arrangements. Nerva alone can claim to have been absolutely disinterested, and the wisdom of his choice was amply justified by the result.

Trajan was the first provincial who attained to the purple. He came from a Roman family that had for generations been settled at Italica, in the Spanish province of Baetica, and it is probable that he had Spanish blood in his veins. His father rose from the ranks, was proconsul of Asia in 79, and was created patrician by Vespasian. Trajan himself—he was born on September 18, 53—had spent his life in arms, and served with distinction in Syria, Spain, and Germany. As a soldier he was brilliant and ambitious. Part of his achievements was solid and enduring. He secured the frontier of the Rhine, and covered that of the Danube by the creation of the new province of Dacia to the north of the river. In the East his military exploits were of a more doubtful character. He added to the Empire four new provinces, Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, established a fleet upon the Red Sea, and is said to have desired to rival Alexander the Great by carrying his standards into India. Of all his Oriental conquests Arabia alone was considered by his successor to be worth retention. He was an ambitious builder also, best known in this respect for the stately column so familiar to all who have visited Rome and the New Forum of which it was an ornament.

But what concerns us most is his personal character. Among the long list of his titles, the one which belongs peculiarly to him is that of Optimus Princeps, and in succeeding times the Senate acclaimed each new Emperor with the cry *Felicior Augusto melior Traiano.* His private morals were not flawless, but he was an excellent ruler, and his justice is beyond question. He maintained strict discipline among the troops, repressed accusations for high treason, and subjected the odious class of informers to severe penalties if they failed to establish their charges. The best illustration of the character which he left behind him is to be found in the anecdote related of Gregory the Great.[1] As the Pope was walking in the Forum of Trajan his attention was attracted by one of the bas-reliefs. When he asked his attendants what was the meaning of the scene depicted, they told him that the Emperor, as he marched out of Rome for one of his campaigns, was accosted by a poor old widow, who complained that her only son had been murdered by some of his soldiers, and demanded vengeance upon the criminals. 'When I return,' said the Emperor, 'I will do thee right.' 'Yes, Sire,' replied the old woman, 'but if thou dost not return no one will do me right.' Trajan at once halted, sent for the accused men, and caused them to compensate the mother for her loss. Gregory was so moved by the tale that he prostrated himself before the tomb of St. Peter, weeping and praying for the good Emperor. As he prayed he fell into an ecstasy, and a voice spoke to him telling him that his petition was granted, but that he must never again ask grace for one who had died unbaptized.

The story is of course apocryphal, suggested by we know not what piece of ancient sculpture, in which a female figure appeared close by the portrait of Trajan. To this some mediaeval guide to the antiquities of Rome may have attached, for the benefit of curious English pilgrims, an anecdote related of Trajan's successor. Hadrian was once accosted in the street by a woman claiming redress. 'I have no time to listen,' he said. 'Then call not thyself Emperor,'

[1] See the story as given in Dudden, vol. i, p. 48, from the St. Gallen *Life*, where the legend first occurs.

she retorted, and upon this he turned and listened to her petition. Add to this the fine stroke of imagination by which the devout and imperially-minded Gregory is brought into the scene, and we have the tale as it was told by the biographer of the great Pope.

But apocryphal as it no doubt is, the anecdote is of peculiar interest for two reasons. It shows that even after the time of Gregory there were those who ventured to entertain a timid hope that the famous men of the old pagan Rome were not wholly outside the possibility of divine mercy. It also shows how reluctant the Church was to believe that so good an Emperor could really have allowed the blood of Christians to be shed for no crime but that of religion. But undoubtedly there was persecution in the East in the reign of Trajan. Whether there was any elsewhere we do not know.

Trajan was above all things a resolute upholder of order and discipline, and it was for the purpose of tightening the reins that he selected Pliny the younger to govern the province of Bithynia as imperial legate, most probably in 111 or 112.

Bithynia had been one of the senatorial provinces, and had suffered much at the hands of bad proconsuls. The Senate could not control its officers, who still, as in the old Republican days, looked upon a provincial government as an easy way of amassing a large fortune to be spent in Rome. Two proconsuls of Bithynia, Bassus and Varenus, had recently been impeached for extortion. Pliny had defended them both, and his appointment can hardly have been altogether welcome to the provincials. But he was a deservedly eminent lawyer, and his integrity was above suspicion.

There was another way in which Pliny's legal experience was likely to stand him in good stead. His practice had lain almost exclusively in the civil courts, and he was a thorough man of business. Now the Bithynian finances were at this time in a deplorable condition. The towns were agitated by furious rivalries. Two of them, Nicomedia the capital, and Nicaea the next in dignity, were with difficulty restrained from flying at one another's throats. The

strife for precedence had not only kindled the most violent party spirit, but had led to extravagant waste of money upon public buildings. Theatres, gymnasia, baths, aqueducts, fora, temples, were run up in feverish haste and at immense expense; they were often so ill-planned and so ill-constructed that they were already falling into ruin, and large sums were needed for alterations and repairs. The municipalities of Nicomedia, Nicaea, Claudiopolis, Prusa, were in a state of insolvency, and the governor was expected by a strict and intelligent supervision to save them from the consequences of their own mismanagement.

The Bithynian proconsuls had been lax also in another direction; they had permitted the formation of a number of unauthorized associations. These clubs or colleges or guilds are a remarkable feature in the social life of the lower classes under the Empire. Some of them were what we might call trades unions, gathering together men and sometimes women who pursued a common avocation. At Pompeii the wood-carriers, the muleteers, the porters, the dyers, the fullers, the fruiterers, the bakers, the innkeepers—in fact all the small industries—had their guilds. Others again rested on the basis of common amusements; in Pompeii there was a club of ball players. Others again were merely benefit societies, providing aid in sickness and a decent burial for the dead. Probably all the colleges promised these last advantages, proper burial being regarded by both Greeks and Romans as a matter of inestimable importance. The extraordinary number of these associations, and the way in which they flourished in spite of the jealousy of the authorities, show the high value set upon them by the poorer class. Each had its officers, its meetings for pleasure or business or worship, its patron god, its banner which was displayed on gala days, and its money-box. They provided their members with an object of social ambition, the offices being very eagerly sought for, and with much sociable amusement; and they guaranteed even to the slave, that when his life came to an end his funeral should be carried out with due solemnity, and attended by the members of his club.

But the government deemed it necessary to keep a strict

control over them. The right of combination and of public meeting, and the right of levying contributions in money, were not recognized, because they could be so easily abused for seditious purposes. Hence, by a decree of the Senate belonging to the reign of Augustus, no college was allowed to exist without a special licence from the authorities, and on condition that business meetings at which the subscriptions were paid should not be held oftener than once a month, and that the funds should be spent in poor relief or funeral expenses, but for no other purposes.[1] Without this licence a college was illicit, and liable to immediate suppression.

It has been supposed that the Church at first managed to shelter itself under the law about colleges, and no doubt there was in many external features a certain resemblance between Church and college. But the truth is rather, as we shall see from the narrative which follows, that the *Senatus Consultum* in restraint of association was one of many formidable dangers which the Church had to meet. Nor is it possible to imagine a bishop applying to a pagan official for a licence which would certainly have been refused. Certainly there is not a shred of evidence that such an application was ever made.

One of the first acts of Pliny in his new office was to issue an edict in conformity with instructions from Trajan, ordering all clubs to be dissolved. His good nature led him after this to apply to the Emperor for indulgence in what he thought a special case. There had been a disastrous conflagration at Nicomedia, and it seemed to Pliny that the formation of a fire-brigade, not to exceed 150 in number, would be a beneficial measure. But Trajan at once refused his licence. Bithynia was full of sedition, and party spirit ran higher at Nicomedia than elsewhere; he could not therefore tolerate any association, however innocent the apparent purpose might be. One exception only did he make. The town of Amisa, a free and federate state, petitioned that it might retain its clubs, on the ground that it was governed by its own laws which permitted them. Trajan replied that if the

[1] Meetings for social feasts or religious worship were not restricted.

Amisene treaty did really allow these associations to be formed, permission might be granted on condition that his indulgence should not be abused for purposes of faction, and that the funds should be applied strictly for the relief of the poor. 'In all other States,' he adds, 'which are bound by Roman law, nothing of the kind can be tolerated.'

As Pliny travelled about his new province on his official visitations he observed a fact which struck him as strange and alarming. He was a religious man who had built and restored temples at his own expense, and was deeply attached to the worship of his fathers. In Italy all seemed to be well; the shrines of Clitumnus and the holy solitude of Lake Vadimo were darkened by no shadow of change, and he could not see that his own mild Stoicism was in any way inconsistent with the strictest pagan orthodoxy. But in Bithynia, wherever he went, in town, village, or open country, the temples of the gods were almost deserted, the old-fashioned worship had long been disused, and the trade in animals for sacrifice was on the point of disappearing. The reason was that the province swarmed with Christians. Here was a new and unexpected trouble for the unfortunate governor.

It is remarkable that as yet no complaints seem to have been made about the new religion. Dion Chrysostom, who knew the country well, was a native and a magistrate of Prusa, had been the moving spirit in the building extravagance of that town, had suffered many things in consequence, and was still residing there in Pliny's time: he knew as much about the factions and animosities of the province as any man alive and has left us a very full account of them, but does not say a single word about the Christians. There must have been many who regarded the Church with hatred; among them no doubt would be the priests and the graziers who were suffering in pocket. Bad governors, such as were Bassus and Varenus, had seen no reason why they should interfere with religious controversies. According to Dion, they had made their profit out of the mutual hatred of Nicomedia and Nicaea, and it is possible that they had taken hush-money from the Church. But it

was known that Pliny was a devout man, and that he had come with stringent instructions to enforce good order. Now, therefore, was the time for an open attack upon the new faith. A *delator* or informer came forward and denounced certain persons as Christians. Pliny sent for the accused and asked them whether the accusation was true. Some denied, some confessed ; the latter he asked a second and third time with threats of punishment. 'Those who persisted,' he adds, 'I sent to execution, for I felt no doubt that, whatever it was that they admitted, contumacy and unyielding obstinacy ought to be punished.' Some of the convicts were Roman citizens ; these he sent to Rome to be tried by the Emperor himself.

It is a most remarkable passage. Pliny knows nothing whatever about Christianity, except that it was a form of religion which had caused trouble in the province and interfered with the legitimate profits of the worthy graziers, as it had interfered with the trade of the silversmiths at Ephesus. He did not regard it as forbidden by law, but it appeared to him to be disorderly and mischievous, and this was quite sufficient. Accordingly he brings at once into play the formidable power inherent in his office of prohibiting anything contrary to good morals, even though it was not a statutory crime. He does not enter into the merits of the case at all. Three times, according to established usage, he ordered the accused to abandon their religion, whatever it might be, and, on their thrice-repeated refusal to obey, put them to death without more ado.

Whether Pliny's competence as legate included the power of inflicting capital punishment for simple disobedience appears to be questionable. But Trajan approved of his conduct.

The matter did not stop here. Shortly afterwards an unsigned paper was posted up in some public place containing a long list of persons who were alleged to be Christians, and now Pliny did what he ought to have known to be an illegal act. The law required, except in specified cases, that there should be a definite and responsible informer. But Pliny took this anonymous unverified accusation as a suffi-

cient ground for procedure, 'sought out' the persons incriminated, caused them to be brought up for trial, and now, having been prompted by some one who knew more about Christianity than he did himself, he adopted a different and much more searching method. How he dealt with those who confessed, if there were any, he does not inform us, but apparently there were for the present no more executions. Some of the accused asserted that they were not and never had been Christians. These he no longer dismissed upon their own assurance, as he seems to have done in the case of the first batch of prisoners, but subjected to three severe tests. He compelled them to repeat after him a prayer to the gods, to burn incense, and to make a libation; he ordered the statue of the Emperor to be brought into court and forced them to adore it, again with incense and wine; and finally he obliged them to curse Christ. Refusal to accept the first test would have marked the recusant as an atheist, and this no doubt was a serious thing, though, except by Domitian, atheism had not for centuries been treated as a crime. The second was the real rock; to decline it was high treason.

Others again admitted that they had once been Christians, but added that they had ceased to be so. Some had left the Church as soon as Pliny's edict against clubs was issued, for, as has been said above, the Church could easily be brought under the description of an illicit college. Some had simply relapsed into heathenism, one as many as twenty years before. To all these the three tests were applied.

At this point it occurred to the perplexed legate that he might as well inquire into the nature of this worship which he had been treating as a crime worthy of death. No doubt some one had told him that the Christians were guilty of gross offences against morality; in particular, that they killed and ate little children. Accordingly he proceeded to question the renegades as people who would know, and would not be disinclined to tell, the worst about the religion that they had abandoned. To his great surprise they told him that there were no enormities at all. 'They maintained that the sum of their fault or error was this, that it was

their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight and sing by turns a hymn to Christ as God; and to bind themselves with an oath, not for any wickedness, but not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, not to break their word, not to deny a deposit when claimed. After this their custom was to depart, and meet together again for the purpose of taking food, but common and innocent food (not human flesh), and even this they had ceased to do after the promulgation of my edict, in which according to your instructions I had forbidden clubs.' Pliny thought it necessary to test this strange evidence in the usual way by the application of torture to two slave women 'who were called ministers', but these poor creatures confirmed the account already given, and he was driven to the conclusion that after all Christianity was nothing worse than 'a bad and extravagant superstition'. Upon this Pliny took alarm and wrote to the Emperor for directions. He saw before him a long vista of prosecutions. He did not know what process had been adopted in previous trials for Christianity, and did not feel sure that his own extemporized method of procedure would be approved. He did not know, again, whether Christianity was a crime or a sin—in the one case repentance could not be urged in arrest of sentence, in the other it might—or whether any distinction should be made in favour of those of tender age. Again, he did not know what was the precise offence, whether it was the mere name of Christian or the 'infamies' (*flagitia*) supposed to be implied in the name—and this he says though he had found out that there were no infamies at all. Finally he expresses his belief that the plague can be stopped. Already his severity had produced a wholesome effect; there were more worshippers in the temples, and the trade in victims was recovering. Such is the famous Dispatch of Pliny, a most helpless and perplexed document. We may regard it charitably as expressing the dismay of the writer on finding himself entangled in a bloody piece of work to which he could see no very hopeful issue.

Trajan, however, felt no qualms. We may give his short rescript in full:—

'You have adopted, my Secundus, quite the right course in examining the cases of those who were denounced to you as Christians. For indeed no general rule can be laid down which might afford what may be called a fixed form of procedure. They must not be sought out: if they are denounced and convicted, they must be punished, yet with this limitation, that any one who denies that he is a Christian and proves his denial by deed, that is to say by adoring our gods, however suspicious his first conduct may have been, shall earn pardon by repentance. But anonymous placards ought not to be regarded in the case of any crime; for that would be a very bad example, unworthy of our time.'

Trajan approves of Pliny's conduct, but what he approves is rather the treatment of the first batch of prisoners than that of the second. It was waste of time to inquire into the *flagitia*; that point is irrelevant. The offence is the 'mere name': a Christian who has been properly denounced and convicted must be put to death. But Christianity is not exactly a crime, and repentance is a good defence. Nor does it stand on the same footing as habitual lawlessness; it is the duty of the magistrate to 'search out' notorious temple-robbers, kidnappers, thieves, brigands, and arrest them when found, but this course must not be taken with Christians. There must be always a responsible *delator*. This last provision was a not inconsiderable safeguard. The *delator* was liable to the heavy penalties of 'calumny' if his charge broke down, and a strong magistrate might refuse to entertain his accusation if he chose to do so. If the rule laid down in Trajan's rescript had been strictly carried out some of the worst persecutions which disgraced the second century would not have occurred. Nevertheless the procedure sanctioned by the Emperor was iniquitously severe. The *delator* was almost always a tainted witness, for he had generally a private end to serve. If he succeeded in obtaining a conviction on a capital charge he received a share, often amounting to a considerable sum, of the property which was confiscated after execution. Yet as against Christians his evidence, contrary to the usual practice of the Roman courts, was received without corroboration; or

rather, the prisoner was compelled to furnish the corroboration against himself. He was asked whether the charge was true; he could not refuse to answer, and confession was immediately fatal.

Whether this tyrannical mode of procedure had ever been adopted before we do not know. Probably it was entirely new. In the persecution of Nero definite crimes were alleged against the Christians and witnesses were examined. What happened in the persecution of Domitian we do not know with precision. Undoubtedly Domitian knew that Christianity and Judaism were not the same thing, and undoubtedly he put Christians to death; but he was rapacious, he was beset by conspirators, and he was in his way strongly religious. Which of these motives guided his conduct towards his Christian victims it is not possible to say. Nor can we tell what form of trial he employed. Nerva did not allow religious belief to be treated as a crime.

Trajan certainly regards Christianity in itself and by itself as a capital crime, and approves of the conduct of Pliny, who called upon his prisoners to 'curse Christ'. But he assigns no reason; he does not give us to understand that he knew anything about Christianity beyond what Pliny told him, and he issued no general edict. A rescript was merely a special letter of instructions sent by the Emperor in response to a special request. A copy was kept in the chancery at Rome, and the same instructions might be sent to any officer who found himself in the same difficulty. But imperial rescripts did not run in senatorial provinces, and copies were not furnished as a matter of course even to all imperial legates. The rescript of Trajan was reversed by his successor Hadrian, and that of Hadrian was reversed by the Antonines. Under Pius and Marcus we find a mode of trial essentially the same as that improvised by Pliny in use in the court of the city praetor, and the apologists begin to complain that Christians are put to death for the mere name. But no trace of Trajan's rescript can be discerned in the stories of the persecutions at Smyrna and Lyons.

Upon the whole, it may be said that Trajan alleviated the position of the Christians by insisting upon the necessity of a responsible informer, but aggravated it by ruling that the plea of moral innocence was no defence. For the rest, he left the matter very much where he found it—in a state of great obscurity. Christianity was a crime, yet not like other crimes. No general rule could be laid down. Yet if the Christian were properly accused and properly convicted he must abjure or die; there was no other alternative. Trajan shakes the matter off with a sort of military impatience. It appeared to him quite obvious that the Bithynians should obey orders, whether the question concerned a fire-brigade or a church. But he does not seem in the least conscious that he is laying down a rule of world-wide significance.

Thus the Christians remained outlaws yet not outlaws. They were perfectly well known to their heathen neighbours, with whom they dined, traded, and intermarried. Their places of worship and cemeteries were not confiscated, their bishops attended synods in large numbers and in the most perilous times. But if in any district they became numerous or aggressive, if they interfered with the trade of a shopkeeper or converted a governor's wife, if a pestilence, a famine, or an earthquake seemed to betoken the wrath of the gods, they were immediately in peril of their lives. A martyr or a little handful of martyrs would be put to death, and then peace reigned once more.

Clearly the average magistrate and the respectable classes generally must have disliked heartily the bloody work of persecution. Informers must have been discouraged, and there must have been some *modus vivendi* established by tacit consent on the one part and on the other.

This state of things, neither peace nor war, endured throughout the second century and down to the middle of the third.

A few words ought to be added upon the liturgical information contained in Pliny's Dispatch. It is accurate as far as it goes, but the main point which the legate desired to ascertain was whether the Christians really were guilty

of cannibalism, as he had no doubt been informed that they were.

He speaks of two services, both held upon a 'fixed day', which was unquestionably Sunday. The first was held 'before daylight', and consisted of antiphonal hymns 'to Christ as God' (an important doctrinal statement) and of moral instruction. Of these hymns we shall hear again towards the end of the century. These were clearly not merely the Davidic psalms, for they must have contained a doxology. They may have been psalms with an added Gloria, or they may have resembled those ante-Nicene canticles which still exist, of which the best known is the *Gloria in Excelsis*. The moral instruction may have been conveyed in prayers, or a homily, or in the recitation of the Decalogue. The word *sacramentum* cannot bear its familiar modern sense. It means the military oath by which soldiers vowed obedience to their general. The Christian was, as his title implies, Christ's soldier, and in all his worship he solemnly acknowledged Christ as the captain of his salvation. But the word 'sacrament' and the implied 'soldier' may be taken to prove that the correlated 'pagan' was already in use amongst the brethren. 'Pagan' is a term borrowed from the slang of the barrack-room, in which all civilians were dubbed 'rustics'.

The first Sunday meeting was in fact a service of Lauds similar to that which we find in the *Testamentum Domini* bearing the title *Laudatio Aurorae*, or to that which Sidonius Apollinaris attended in Gaul on the saint's day of St. Justus in the fifth century. In this latter case the Eucharist was celebrated after an interval of some hours, at 9 o'clock.

Of the second meeting Pliny only says that in it the Church 'took food', and that the food was innocent. There was no Thyestean banquet. Whether this religious meal was the Eucharist proper, or the Eucharist combined with an Agape, we cannot say with confidence, but it may well have been the former, for about this very time Ignatius of Antioch distinguishes the Agape from the Eucharist.

CHAPTER X

IGNATIUS

The Bithynian persecution was not the only one that occurred in the reign of Trajan. There was another at Antioch, the chief city of the East. It caused many executions, but did not last long. Ignatius heard at Troas very shortly after his own condemnation that 'the Church which is in Antioch of Syria hath peace', and requested the Philadelphians 'to appoint a deacon to go thither as God's ambassador that he may congratulate them when they are assembled together, and may glorify the Name'.[1] Directly the storm was over the sun shone again, and everything went on as before. Within a week or two we see the Church assembling again for its Sunday worship, and listening to a sermon on the lessons to be drawn from its recent affliction. It is a curious proof of the utterly anomalous position of Christianity. Every now and then the authorities struck a blow as a fierce animal gives a bite, but they had no policy.

Unfortunately we have no knowledge of the catastrophe beyond that which is given in the Letters of Ignatius himself, the Martyrologies being mere romances. The date cannot be very precisely fixed. Bishop Lightfoot[2] places it within a few years of 110 A. D., before or after. If we might go down as low as 115 we might find a cause of the outbreak in the great earthquake which ravaged Antioch on December 13, when the Emperor Trajan was in the city superintending the preparations for his second Parthian campaign, and nearly lost his life owing to the fall of the

[1] *Phil.* 10. [2] Ign. vol. i, p. 30.

palace. On the other hand, there is some slight reason for regarding the Antiochene persecution as contemporaneous with that in Bithynia. In the company of Ignatius at Philippi we find two other martyrs, Zosimus and Rufus, who are mentioned by Polycarp, but not by Ignatius himself.[1] It has been suggested, not without probability, by Dr. Zahn, that these were two of those Bithynian Christians who, being citizens, were sent by Pliny for trial at Rome. If this suggestion be accepted, we might infer that the attack upon the Church in Bithynia was prompted by what had happened at Antioch just before.

In any case, it is not difficult to see motives for this outbreak in the great Eastern city. The population of Antioch was notorious for its factious spirit; it was there that the nickname Christian had been invented; and men's minds were at the time, possibly, excited by the imminence of the Parthian war which broke out in 113. Trajan himself entered Antioch on January 7, 114, and held his winter quarters there in 114–15 and 115–16. But it is not likely that he witnessed the persecution, or presided at the trial of Ignatius himself, for the Emperor was never in Antioch except for the winter, and, as Ignatius was tried in the month of July or August, he cannot have been brought before Trajan himself.

The Epistles of Ignatius have given rise to one of the most famous of literary controversies, now happily laid to rest, chiefly through the labours of our great Bishop Lightfoot. They were highly popular, and, like many other non-canonical writings which found wide acceptance, were treated with great and what we should think unscrupulous freedom.

The seven genuine Epistles, to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, and to Polycarp, were known to Polycarp of Smyrna, a contemporary, quoted by Irenaeus, quoted with the name of the author by Origen, and quite familiar to Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century. Some time in the fourth or early fifth century they were seized upon by an unknown writer,

[1] Polycarp, *Phil.* 9.

probably the same who compiled the *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, freely interpolated, and increased to the number of thirteen. This collection is known as the Longer Recension. In the fourth century again a Syrian writer translated and abbreviated the seven Epistles; we possess his version of the Epistles to the Ephesians, Romans, and Polycarp, with a few fragments of the others. This is known as the Short or Curetonian text, because it was first given to the world by the eminent Syriac scholar Cureton in 1845. We have also an Armenian version of the fifth century, derived from the Syriac. In the thirteenth century there appeared in England a Latin translation of the seven Epistles which Ussher attributed with great probability to Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln. The Latin version was printed by Ussher in 1644, the Greek text of the six Epistles to the churches of Asia Minor by Isaac Voss in 1646, that of the Epistle to the Romans by Ruinart in 1689. The manifest differences between the three versions offered a most intricate problem for criticism, but a great part in the debate was played by theological prejudice. Protestant divines found it difficult to believe that monarchical episcopacy could have existed in the time of Trajan. But the seven Epistles are now generally accepted by scholars.

Of the life of Ignatius we know extremely little. He was Bishop of Antioch, after Euodius, second or third in the succession, according as we believe or do not believe that St. Peter was the first. The date of his birth and the date of his accession are matter of conjecture. The name by which he is generally known, Ignatius or Egnatius, is Italian, but he bore also another name, Theophorus, which probably means 'prophet'. He speaks of himself as 'one born out of due time',[1] a phrase borrowed from St. Paul, implying that he had been converted, probably after he had reached man's estate. It has been inferred, partly from his own words,[2] partly from the fact that he was condemned to the beasts, that he was of servile birth, and though the inference is not certain it may well be correct. Later tradition made him a disciple of St. Peter, or of St. Paul,

[1] *Rom.* 9. [2] *Rom.* 4.

or of St. John, but the authors of these statements were probably guided by the belief that this 'apostolic man' must have been personally connected with the original Apostles. Yet the statements are not chronologically impossible. If Ignatius was an old man at the time of his death, and was born, as some think, about 40 A. D., he may have known Peter and Paul, and even if he was not converted till middle age he must have heard much of St. John, although he may not have been, in the strict sense of the words, the Apostle's disciple. In any case, he must have been acquainted with men who remembered the first foundation of the Church of Antioch. A tradition is recorded by the historian Socrates[1] to the effect that Ignatius once saw a vision of angels praising the Holy Trinity in antiphonal hymns, and established this practice as a custom of the Church in Antioch. But antiphonal singing, which existed, as we have seen, in the Church of Bithynia, was derived from Jewish usage.[2]

About 110 A. D. persecution broke out in Antioch. Ignatius was tried by the legate of Syria, and sentenced to be carried to Rome and there thrown to the beasts. Such sentences were not uncommon, but they required the permission of the Emperor, and the convicts selected for the purpose were stout young men or hunters who 'could worthily be exhibited to the Roman people'.[3] We might conclude that Ignatius was not really an old man at the time of his martyrdom; and indeed the fervid, eager style of his writings seems to betoken an author whose blood still ran warm and strong.

At this point the martyr suddenly emerges into the full light of day. He was sent to Rome in charge of a detachment of ten soldiers—'leopards,' he calls them, 'who are

[1] *H. E.* vi. 8 *ad fin.*

[2] There are differences as to the date even amongst those who accept the Epistles as genuine. Harnack places them in the last years of Trajan (110–17), or possibly a few years later (*Chron.* i. 406). Lightfoot did not absolutely deny that they may be later than the date which he assigned, though he thought it improbable (ii. 469). The chief difficulty arises out of the chronology of Polycarp.

[3] *Dig.* 48. 19. 31, cited by Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, p. 926.

made worse by benefits.' These military escorts would allow their prisoners considerable indulgences for payment, and no doubt availed themselves of the opportunity to extort as much as they could. Ignatius was accompanied by friends, received deputations from churches, wrote long letters, and dispatched messengers. Every one of these concessions would be purchased by a heavy bribe. At first apparently the land route was taken, and the first place at which we know a halt to have been made was Philadelphia, where there was a church with which Ignatius was not fully satisfied. The next stoppage mentioned in the Epistles was at Smyrna, where he was entertained by Polycarp and the local church. Hither came representatives from various important communities, near, but not on the road by which he had travelled. From Ephesus came the Bishop Onesimus, a deacon named Burrhus, and three others; from Magnesia the Bishop Damas, two presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and a deacon, Zotion; from Tralles only the Bishop Polybius. From Smyrna Ignatius wrote four letters, three to the Ephesians, Magnesians, and Trallians, to be carried home by the bishops whom he had seen, and one to the Romans, to apprise that church of his coming and of the exultation with which he looked forward to the crown of martyrdom. It is highly noticeable that he begs the Romans not to hinder his martyrdom. He must have been aware that there were personages of rank in that church whose petition on his behalf would not be wholly disregarded. A stay of some duration must have been made at Smyrna, or it would have been impossible thus to send on a messenger in advance, and accordingly we find that Ignatius mentions more persons by name in the Church of Polycarp than in any other. The Epistle to the Romans is the only one that bears a date; it was written on August 24.[1]

The next important halt was made at Troas, where a ship had to be found. Here again Ignatius met friends—Philo, a Cilician deacon, and Rhaius Agathopus, a member of his

[1] If this date is correct, Ignatius cannot have been tried before Trajan, who died early in August: see Schiller, *Geschichte d. Römischen Kaiserzeit*, pp. 561-2.

own Syrian Church, who had followed in his track to minister to him in the Word of God, and to bring him the glad news that the Church of Antioch was again in peace. From Troas he wrote the three remaining letters, to Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to Polycarp; the last is the only one of his Epistles which bears a personal address. He loved and trusted Polycarp above others. He begs that messengers or letters may be sent to Antioch and to cities on the road to convey his last greeting. He himself had not time to write more, as a ship had been procured and was to set sail at once.

From Troas to Neapolis his journey was continued by sea, and thence by land to Philippi. Here two other martyrs, Zosimus and Rufus, were delivered into the charge of his escort. The Philippians showed to Ignatius the same love and generosity which they had shown in the old days to St. Paul, regarding the chains of the martyrs as diadems of the truly elect. By his desire they wrote to Polycarp begging him to forward their letter to Antioch, begging him also to send them copies of such letters of Ignatius as he possessed.

Here the curtain falls as suddenly as it rose. No doubt he perished, as he expected and desired, in the Roman arena, probably on October 17.[1] Towards the end of the fourth century his grave was shown in a cemetery outside the Daphne Gate of Antioch. It is not perhaps wholly impossible that his mangled remains had been collected and conveyed back to the city which had been the scene of his labours. But it was a credulous age, when relics of the martyrs were too easily discovered.[2]

As we read the Letters of Ignatius the first and most important characteristic which impresses us is his exalted enthusiasm. Like Paul, like Cyprian, he was a prophet who had 'many deep thoughts in God', and could 'comprehend heavenly things, and the arrays of the angels, and

[1] Lightfoot, ii. 416.

[2] This seems to have been the day on which Irenaeus was originally commemorated by the Greek Church. Afterwards the festival was shifted to December 20. The Latins keep it on February 1.

the musterings of the principalities, things visible and things invisible'. He strove not to overvalue the grace, because he knew that it might lead to boasting, and was afraid that his revelations might do harm to babes.[1] By 'babes' he means, as St. Paul does, those whose understanding was not yet enlightened, the simpler brethren. They showed their simplicity by demurring to the authority of the bishop. At Philadelphia, where the church was distracted by strange teaching, by some kind of Gnostic Judaism, the Spirit fell upon Ignatius, and he 'spake with a loud voice, with God's own voice, Give ye heed to the bishop and the presbytery and the deacons. . . . But He in whom I am bound is my witness that I learned it not from flesh of man. It was the preaching of the Spirit who spake on this wise, Do nothing without the bishop, keep your flesh as a temple of God, cherish union, shun divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ as He Himself was also of His Father.'[2] So highly did Ignatius prize the grace of prophecy that he exhorts Polycarp to seek after it with all diligence. 'Ask,' he writes, 'for larger wisdom than thou hast. . . . As for the invisible things, pray thou that they may be revealed unto thee, that thou mayest be lacking in nothing, but mayest abound in every spiritual gift.'[3] Polycarp confesses that he had not as yet received this special inspiration, and could only understand the plain teaching of Scripture. Yet he hoped that the Philippians to whom he was writing were more favoured. 'I am persuaded,' he says, 'that ye are well trained in the sacred writings and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted.'[4] It may be observed that to Polycarp prophecy does not mean the same thing as to Ignatius. To the latter, as to Hermas, it is a Voice conveying an immediate revelation; to the former, as to Origen, it is an interpretative power, which discovers beneath the literal sense of Scripture mysteries which are not visible to the eye of mere common sense. But neither Ignatius nor Polycarp appears to have the slightest acquaintance with the official prophet described in the *Didache*.

[1] *Trall.* 4, 5. [2] *Phil.* 7. [3] *Polyc.* 1. [4] *Ep. Pol.* 12.

Where there is prophecy in the ecstatic sense there must always be a highly wrought enthusiasm and a strongly emotional temperament. With these qualities is often combined an autocratic will. In all these points Ignatius strongly resembles Cyprian.

It is in the Epistles of Ignatius [1] that we find the phrase 'My Love is crucified', in which *Eros*, 'darling,' the word of passionate sexual affection, is for the first time applied to the believer's sentiment towards his Lord. In the third century Origen was shocked by this misuse of language, which was peculiarly repugnant to the intellectual devotion of the Alexandrines. He ended by adopting the term, because it was sanctioned by the use of a distinguished martyr, and because it appeared to furnish a key to the interpretation of the Song of Songs. Nevertheless the use of Eros never became familiar to the Eastern Church. The Latin *Amor*, a word of much wider and much less sensuous meaning, became common enough. It would have been well if the Ignatian sentimentality, exaggerated as it may be, had prevailed. The early Christians were too much inclined to regard their Lord and Judge with fear, and the cult of the saints would have been kept within reasonable bounds, if they had allowed themselves to dwell with more affection upon the humanity of Jesus.

Out of this intense and heartfelt devotion arises quite naturally a burning desire for the martyr's crown. Ignatius is not merely content to suffer if it is the Lord's will, but springs forward with rapture to embrace his fiery trial. 'Let me be given to the wild beasts,' he writes to the Romans, 'for through them I can attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread. Rather entice the wild beasts that they may become my sepulchre, and leave no part of my body behind, so that I may not, when I fall asleep, be burdensome to any one. Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see my body.' Ignatius declares that if the beasts should be sluggish and unwilling to spring upon him he

[1] *Rom.* 7.

will himself provoke them. This he says had happened already, when or where we know not, but our knowledge of these terrible scenes is exceedingly defective.

It is the death-song of a highly-strung, delicate spirit, bracing itself with unconquerable resolution to dare the utmost in the cause of Christ. Many men and many women in all the churches were filled with the same divine intoxication. The world was against them, and they defied the world.

The martyr spirit inclines naturally to autocracy, and this trait also is strongly marked in the character of Ignatius. Unity in faith and discipline is the condition of the Church's life. There must be one prayer in common, one supplication, one mind, one hope in love and in joy unblameable,[1] one Eucharist, one altar,[2] one temple.[3] All this rests upon the mystic unity of the Catholic Church [4] with Jesus Christ and of Jesus Christ with the Father.[5] The bishop is one indispensable link in this chain, being the image of Christ. Beneath him stand the presbyters, the image of the Apostles, who are 'attuned to the bishop as the chords to the lyre'; beneath them the deacons, and beneath them again the laity, the chorus, which, being harmonious in concord and taking the key-note of God, sings with one voice through Jesus Christ unto the Father. Thus the Father hears them, and acknowledges them by their good deeds to be members of His Son.[6] Without the bishop and the presbyters there is not even the name of a church.[7] Nothing must be done without the bishop. Without his presence or sanction baptism cannot be administered, the Eucharist is not valid, the Agape may not be held. Marriage should not be concluded without the bishop's consent, and if any member of the community were minded to live a life of celibacy the resolve should remain a secret between him or her and the bishop. No such language had been used in the Church before, or at any rate it is not in any previous document

[1] *Magn.* 7. [2] *Phil.* 4. [3] *Magn.* 7.

[4] This famous phrase, 'Catholic Church,' appears for the first time in Ignatius, *Smyr.* 8. In the *Martyrium Polycarpi*, in the Salutation, we have 'holy and Catholic church'.

[5] *Eph.* 5. [6] *Eph.* 4. [7] *Trall.* 3.

now extant, and nothing was added to it afterwards. It is true that the bishop was not an absolute despot.[1] The law is above him, and he shares his claim to obedience with priests and even deacons. We may find the same limitation in Cyprian and the *Didascalia*. Indeed always the bishop is regarded not as a tyrant, but rather as a Homeric or constitutional king. There was no formal check upon a resolute bishop, but any departure from orthodoxy was curbed by remonstrance and, if necessary, by active interference from other bishops; and in all matters of internal administration it was necessary for the bishop to carry the general sense of his Church along with him.

In all the Asiatic towns mentioned by Ignatius in his Epistles he found bishops like himself. But Pliny does not mention any chief of the Church in Bithynia, and Ignatius himself does not mention a bishop in the Church of Rome.[2] There may have been an interregnum in the city. The list and chronology of the early Popes is very uncertain, but Euaristus is said to have succeeded in 112, which may have been the very year in which Ignatius wrote. But the silence of Pliny is remarkable. He would be anxious to lay hold of the leader of the Christians, and the *delator* would be equally anxious to point him out. At least so we should have thought. But Pliny's mind was fixed on the one point of the alleged moral enormities. He does not mention bishops or presbyters or deacons, and in fact did not inquire into the organization of the Church at all.

Ignatius speaks in the strongest terms of the authority of the bishop, clearly distinguishes the bishop from the presbyter, and clearly also does not allow the prophet, as such, any place in the hierarchy. But his statements are not so precise as to answer all the questions suggested by the almost contemporary Epistle of Clement. If we ask whether Episcopacy was at this time universal, he replies that it was. Bishops, he says, are settled in the furthest parts of the earth.[3] If we ask whether Episcopacy was at the time an innovation,

[1] See passages in Lightfoot, i, p. 382.
[2] Polycarp mentions no bishop at Philippi.
[3] *Eph.* 3.

he replies that it was not. There were some who resisted the authority of the bishop, both in discipline and in doctrine; they disputed his ruling, as many have done since, but did not question his rule.[1] There can be no doubt that Ignatius regarded Episcopacy in some sense as original and as divinely ordered. But the crucial question whether the bishop was at this time constituted by a special rite of ordination administered only by other bishops, he does not touch.

There is another remarkable but obscure point. Ignatius speaks of himself[2] as 'the Bishop of Syria'. Does this simply mean, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, 'the Syrian bishop,' that is to say the Bishop of Antioch; or does it mean that Ignatius claimed jurisdiction over all churches in the province of Syria? The latter explanation can very well be supported. The bishop may have been originally called Apostle, may have supervised a large district, as was the case with Timothy and Titus—may have had his abode in the chief town of the province; and thus the institution of Episcopacy may have spread, as Theodore of Mopsuestia believed, from above downwards. On the other hand, Ignatius tells us of bishops in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Magnesia,[3] Tralles, and Philadelphia, which were mostly in the one province of Asia, and all lay pretty close together. We might infer from this that every large town and every considerable church had a bishop, and thus support the opinion of Jerome that the bishop was originally the chief presbyter, and that episcopacy spread from below upwards.

It is impossible to draw any certain conclusion from these facts. It may be true that even in the country of Ignatius the principal officer of the church was only a dean. But it is clear that in the cities mentioned in the Epistles he is already distinguished sharply from the presbyters by the title of bishop, and that his authority is being strongly affirmed and enhanced.

Upon the bishop Ignatius relies for the suppression of divisions in the Church. There were 'heresies' among the

[1] *Magn.* 4. [2] *Rom.* 2.

[3] In Mommsen's map Magnesia ad Meandrum is put in Caria, not in Asia—at a later date Magnesia was in Asia. See note in Lightfoot, *Magn.* 1.

Asiatics, 'deadly poison'[1] which led to separation.[2] They were partly Docetism, partly Judaism; apparently these two aberrations were blended together in the same web. Ignatius seems to have come into collision with these sectaries first at Philadelphia. Some of them came to see him in that town, and his address was roughly interrupted by the exclamation, 'If I find it not in the archives, I believe it not in the Gospel.' He answered, 'It is written,' to which they retorted, 'That is the question.'[3] What a scene! Think of this delicate enthusiast on his way to the wild beasts, standing there bound by a chain to his soldier guard, while he poured out his soul in a last pathetic address, and these dry controversialists who thought this the auspicious time for a wrangle. By 'archives' may be meant either the Old Testament or the authentic copies of the Gospels. The precise point at issue is probably defined in the words which Ignatius adds: 'But as for me, my archives are Jesus Christ; the inviolable (or unviolated) archives are His Cross and Death and Resurrection and faith through Him.' The reality of the death of Christ was denied, either as not having been clearly prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures, or as not being expressly stated in the original text of the Gospels. Both St. Luke[4] and St. John[5] appear to have found this strange belief, that the sufferings and indeed the whole human life of our Lord were purely phantasmal, current in their own time, and endeavoured to correct it. But it was adopted by many of the Gnostics, and existed in England among certain of the sectaries in the time of the Civil War. Either these Philadelphian dissenters did not read the Gospels of Luke and John, or they asserted that they had been tampered with or they managed to explain away the texts in question, as Marcion did at a later time.[6]

It followed naturally that they disregarded Sunday, the day of the Resurrection[7]; further, that they kept aloof from the Eucharist 'because they allow not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ'.[8] But further, they kept the Sabbath, retained the 'vile leaven', and prac-

[1] *Trall.* 6. [2] *Smyr.* 6. [3] *Phil.* 8. [4] xxiv. 39.
[5] xx. 27. [6] See Lightfoot, i. 366. [7] *Magn.* 9. [8] *Smyr.* 6.

tised Judaism.[1] What more may have been covered by their 'strange doctrines and antiquated fables'[2] we cannot say.

Ignatius maintains, on the other hand, that if the reality of our Lord's body and bodily suffering is destroyed the faith is wholly overthrown. 'Be ye fully persuaded concerning the birth and the Passion and the Resurrection, which took place in the time of the governorship of Pontius Pilate.'[3] 'Be ye deaf therefore when any man speaketh unto you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died.'[4]

Were these Judaic docetists disciples of those false teachers 'which say that they are Jews and are not', whom St. John had found in Smyrna and in Philadelphia[5]? or of those who denied 'that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh'[6]? At any rate, they were nearly allied to them. The Asiatic churches were the hot-bed of wild fancies even in the time of St. Paul. Nowhere was the strong hand of a sensible bishop more needed than in that district.

It should be noticed that the difficulty of these teachers does not appear to have arisen out of the divinity of our Lord; the humanity was the stumbling-block. 'The Oriental mind,' says Bishop Lightfoot, 'in its most serious moods was prone to regard matter as the source of evil.'[7] So indeed at this time was the Western mind. Further, we may observe that all the elements of the later developed Gnosticism were already in existence. Docetism clearly was there; Dualism, the belief in two gods, one good and the other evil, is found in the essays of Plutarch and the cults of Isis and Mithra. For chains or 'genealogies' of superhuman beings who bridge over the gulf between God and man, we need not look further than the demons.

The real harm of Docetism is that it turns not only the life of Jesus but that of the believer also into semblance. If the body of our Lord was not real nothing is real.[8]

[1] *Magn.* 9. 10. [2] *Magn.* 8. [3] *Magn.* 11. [4] *Trall.* 9.
[5] Apoc. ii. 9; iii. 9. [6] 1 John iv. 3. [7] i. 365. [8] *Trall.* 10.

Docetism sweeps away the whole of the Economy, or dispensation, or plan of salvation. All the Epistles of Ignatius are occasional, and directed against this particular form of error. Hence he does not treat exactly of what later Fathers called Theology, the doctrine of the divine Nature, except in so far as he speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as co-operating in Redemption.

What, then, is the Economy? 'There is One God, who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word that proceeded from silence, who in all things was well pleasing to Him that sent Him.'[1] The Son is 'generate and ingenerate, God in man, Son of Mary, and Son of God, first passible and then impassible',[2] the Eternal, the Invisible, who became visible for our sake.[3] Christ is generally 'our God', 'my God,' that is to say the God of the Christian, and so close is the union of the two Natures that Ignatius does not shrink from speaking of 'the blood of God'.[4] 'Hidden from the prince of this world were the virginity of Mary and her child-bearing, and likewise also the death of our Lord—three mysteries of crying which were wrought in the silence of God.'[5] The Silence which is broken by the sudden utterance of the Word is the eternal counsel of God; it is opposed to the 'cry' Revelation. Ignatius intended to write to the Ephesians a second epistle, in which he meant to enter more fully into this Economy relating to the 'new man Jesus Christ, which consisteth in faith towards Him and love towards Him'. Probably he was prevented from doing so by the sudden order to go on board ship at Troas; but there are passages enough to show us what he would have said. By his Birth, Baptism, and Passion, Christ 'cleansed the water'.[6] From the Passion and the Resurrection spring Life, Unity, Love, and Joy. By imitating the Passion of our God we become true disciples.[7]

There is no logic and no speculation in Ignatius. He was no metaphysician, and is wrapped up in the practical religious thought of Redemption; but the whole creed can be found in his Epistles without difficulty. Like most prophets, he

[1] *Magn.* 8. [2] *Eph.* 7. [3] *Polyc.* 3. [4] *Eph.* 1.
[5] *Eph.* 19. [6] *Eph.* 18. [7] *Trall.* 5.

quotes very little from Scripture. His own voice is the voice of God,[1] a word of God.[2] There are, however, a very large number of references to the Bible. The Old Testament was little in his mind; the New Testament, including the Gospel of St. John, he very probably knew throughout.[3] But his favourite author was St. Paul, whom he read, we may say, with the eyes of St. John. Once he quotes, though not by name, an apocryphal document.[4]

The Eucharist in the Church of Antioch was already distinct from the Agape,[5] and Ignatius constantly seems to refer to it. But it is difficult to fix a precise sense upon his highly metaphorical language.

Thus he repeatedly speaks of the altar, but always in an unusual and figurative sense. 'If any one,' he says, 'be not within the altar he lacketh the bread. For, if the prayer of one and another hath so great force, how much more that of the bishop and of the whole church. Whosoever therefore cometh not to the congregation, he doth thereby show his pride, and hath separated himself.'[6] Here the altar of sacrifice may possibly mean the Cross; the baptized and obedient community are 'within', on the safe side of that pledge of their salvation; while the unbaptized and disobedient are 'without' it.[7] Elsewhere 'the one altar' is 'the one Jesus Christ.'[8] Here also the inference is drawn that the faithful ought to 'hasten to come together'.

So also 'the bread', or 'the bread of God', seems to be generally used as a symbol of unity, as it is by St. Paul.[9] Thus he says, 'Be ye careful therefore to observe one eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup of union in His blood).'[10] He sometimes uses language which seems to imply a Real Presence in the elements. The judaizing Docetists 'abstain from eucharist and prayer because they allow not that the eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ'[11]; but again we read that faith is the Flesh of our Lord, while love is His Blood[12]; or again, that

[1] *Phil.* 7. [2] *Rom.* 2.
[3] See list of places in Lightfoot's Index, ii. [4] *Smyr.* 3.
[5] *Smyr.* 8, but Lightfoot does not allow this; see his note upon the passage.
[6] *Eph.* 5. [7] *Trall.* 7. [8] *Magn.* 7. [9] 1 Cor. x. 17.
[10] *Phil.* 4. [11] *Smyr.* 6. [12] *Trall.* 8.

the Gospel is the flesh of Jesus.[1] We may be justified in ranking Ignatius with the Symbolists, who were very numerous in the early Church. In the passage already quoted the special gift of the sacrament is the unity of love. In another place [2] he ascribes to it another virtue, 'breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote, that we should not die, but live for ever in Jesus Christ.' Here Ignatius is thinking of the Gospel of St. John, and his words should be interpreted by the rule which our Lord there lays down: 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' What Ignatius here says should not be regarded as equivalent to the teaching of Irenaeus in certain passages,[3] where the latter Father speaks of the Eucharist as the means by which the flesh is changed into the glorified body of the Resurrection. The immortality of which Ignatius is speaking is the spiritual life of the blessed in the Kingdom of Christ.

[1] *Phil.* 5. [2] *Eph.* 20. [3] iv. 18. 5; v. 2. 3.

CHAPTER XI

HADRIAN

Trajan was succeeded by his cousin, countryman, and ward, P. Aelius Hadrianus.

Hadrian was born in Rome on January 24, A. D. 76, but his ancestors had been settled in the Spanish town of Italica since the time of the Hannibalic war. He lost his father in A. D. 87, and was brought up by Trajan, whose childless wife Plotina seems to have regarded him as her own son and married him to Sabina, a great-niece of the Emperor. He was pushed rapidly along the usual course of promotion in which civil magistracies alternated with military commands, and became consul in 109.

On August 11, 117, a few days after the death of Trajan, he was acclaimed as Emperor by the army at Antioch, being at the time Legate of Syria, and the Senate, though they had not been consulted, did not venture to demur.

From some reason or another Trajan seems to have shrunk from making any definite arrangement as to the succession till the very last. He may have been unwilling to contemplate the possibility of his own sudden decease. He had bestowed upon Hadrian many marks of high favour, and had led men to look upon his cousin as his adopted son. On the other hand, Hadrian had been accused of extravagance and indebtedness, and his flighty ways may have caused suspicion in the mind of the severe old soldier Emperor. According to one account, Trajan formally adopted Hadrian a few days before his death; according to another, Hadrian was never formally adopted at all. It was said that Plotina concealed the fact of her husband's death till she could make arrangements for the proclamation of Hadrian, and represented what was really her own action as the will of Trajan. In any case, there was no opposition. The acclamation of the army only anticipated the expectation of

mankind. Hadrian fully justified his elevation, and proved to be one of the most politic and statesmanlike of Emperors. In every department of administration he introduced great and salutary reforms. He looked into everything with his own keen eyes and his own strong intelligence, and set the Empire definitely on the road which it was thenceforward to follow.

He was a thorough soldier, and had borne his full part in the exploits of Trajan. Every detail of the military life he knew as well as if he had never been anything but a centurion. He is said to have marched 20,000 miles on foot, bareheaded and in full accoutrements. When in camp he lived upon the bacon, cheese, and sour wine which formed the rations of the troops. He looked closely into the merits and demerits of officers and men, visited the sick in the military hospitals, maintained strict discipline, but would not permit corruption or barbarity,[1] and gave to the administration of the army that shape which it still retained in the time of Dio Cassius.[2]

Yet he had no military ambition, and deliberately renounced Trajan's love of conquest and adventure. There were many seditions or revolts in the provinces, in Africa, on the Danube, in Lycia, and in Britain; the last named was not suppressed without considerable loss of life,[3] and the Roman army was none too large to maintain the peace on and within the frontiers. Hadrian might well consider that the Empire was already vast enough, and that the right policy was to defend, consolidate, and improve his dominions. Thus he gave up all Trajan's acquisitions beyond the Euphrates, built the British Wall, and fortified the German frontier. His formidable preparedness secured him against attacks, but he disliked war, and did not disdain to purchase peace in the East by gifts and subsidies to the potentates beyond the frontier.[4]

He made great reforms in the fiscal system. The unscientific and oppressive nature of Roman finance is attested by the fact that Hadrian found himself obliged to remit

[1] *Vita*, 10. [2] Dio Cass. 69. 9. [3] *Vita*, 5; Fronto, ed. Naber, p. 217 sq. [4] *Vita*, 17.

arrears of taxation to the amount of £9,000,000.[1] He burnt the bonds publicly in the Forum of Trajan, thus relieving the immediate distress, and did much to improve the system out of which the distress arose by abolishing the farming of the taxes, introducing the method of direct responsible collection of all imposts,[2] and creating for this purpose a new and highly organized civil service.[3]

In the sphere of jurisprudence also Hadrian's services were very great. He himself presided with great diligence in the imperial court, and his privy council was formed not as before of the Emperor's personal friends, but of distinguished lawyers.[4] One of them, Salvius Julianus, was the author of the final edition of the Perpetual Edict, in which the system of equity created by the labours of earlier praetors was arranged in a new and symmetrical order.[5] Something was done by these lawyers for morality; men and women were forbidden to bathe together in the public baths, and some alleviation was provided for the hard lot of the slave. Down to this time the master could kill his slave at his own will and pleasure, or sell him, if a man to the fencing master, if a woman to the brothel keeper. Of these infamous rights the first was abolished, the second restricted. Down to this time again, if a master was murdered in his house all his slaves—man, woman, and child—were crucified. Henceforth only those slaves were to be executed who were within reach of a cry for help at the time.[6] Hadrian was an indefatigable traveller. Of his three tours, the first (121–6) carried him over the whole Empire; the second (128?) was confined to Africa; the third (129–34) covered again nearly the whole of the East. His wanderings had most practical purposes. Wherever he went he corrected disorders, infused new vigour into the imperial machine, dispensed bounty with calculated magnificence, and made himself at home. But he was also as ardent a sightseer as any modern tourist, climbing Mount Etna and Mount Casius to watch the

[1] *C. I. L.* vi. 1, p. x.
[2] Schiller, p. 620.
[3] Pelham, *Outlines of Roman History*, p. 476.
[4] *Vita*, 18.
[5] Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 63 sq.
[6] *Vita*, 18.

sunrise, and visiting all the curiosities that the local guides could point out. In the course of his third journey he visited Egypt, which was even then as famous a resort for invalids and travellers as it is now. As he sailed up the Nile he lost his darling Antinous, that beautiful youth whose exquisite melancholy features are so well known from his many statues. Hadrian wept for him 'like a woman',[1] built a city in his memory, believed that his soul was changed into a star, and encouraged the Greek world to worship him as a demigod. Men said that Hadrian celebrated unholy magical rites in some dark Egyptian shrine, and that Antinous gave up his life to placate the infernal gods, who would not speak unless bribed with human blood.[2]

Some time after Hadrian's return from Egypt in the year 134 he wrote to his aged brother-in-law Servianus a curious letter describing his impressions of the land of the Nile. It is of so much interest for the light which it throws upon the Emperor's character and upon his disposition towards the Christian Church that it may here be translated as far as it concerns our purpose:—

'Egypt which you praised to me so warmly, my dear Servianus, I found altogether frivolous, unstable, and shifting with every breath of rumour. There those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis. There is in that country no ruler of the synagogue of the Jews, no Samaritan, no Christian priest who is not astrologer, soothsayer, or apothecary.[3] Even the renowned patriarch when he comes to Egypt is compelled by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ. . . . Their one god is money. Him Christians, Jews, and Gentiles alike adore. . . . Finally, when I left the country, they had much to say about my son Verus; what they said about Antinous I fancy you know very well.'[4]

The letter is flippant enough, and probably reproduces the airy gossip with which Hadrian was entertained by the light-hearted staff officers who acted as his guides. The

[1] *Vita*, 14. [2] Dio Cass. 69. 11. [3] *aliptes*: see Facciolati.
[4] Text printed in Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 464.

Emperor would know a good deal about the Jews, for he was in Egypt just before or just after the revolt of Barcochba. He knew that they had synagogues, and rulers of synagogues, and a patriarch, who was the head of the rabbinical school of Tiberias. He knew also that Christians and Jews spoke of the heathen as Gentiles. He had heard of bishops and of priests. What reason he had for saying that Christians would do anything and worship any god for money, or on compulsion, we do not know. It was the age of incipient Gnosticism; sects of this kind abounded in Egypt, and some of them combined the adoration of the old heathen divinities with that of Christ. But the Emperor may be simply repeating one of those scoffs which at all times were to be heard in the streets and music-halls of Alexandria. The remarkable thing is the good humour of his sarcasm. It does not seem to enter into his head that he might be called upon at any moment to nail these foolish sectaries upon the cross. The point is of importance, as we shall see presently when we come to speak of his Rescript.

Hadrian's was a mocking spirit, but under all his gibes lay the same profound melancholy which saddens the face of his favourite Antinous. The verses in which he bade farewell to his own soul give charming expression to the pathos of scepticism. He was not a wit, but a humorist. He took his own great duties, as we have seen, in the most serious spirit, but he could not endure pretentiousness, pedantry, or affectation. The literary men and artists of his time were deeply tinged with these defects, and he treated them often with merciless ridicule. He mocked at the grammarian Favorinus, and when Florus presented him with a copy of verses he repaid the hungry bard with a cruel parody of his flattering lines. Hadrian was himself an accomplished amateur. He spoke and wrote Greek, a faculty which was already looked upon as a distinction. When he made his first speech in the Senate as quaestor at the age of twenty-four his cultivated audience was shocked by the rusticity of his Latin, but he overcame this defect. He painted a little, wrote verses like a gentleman,

and delighted in the society of professors, artists, and astrologers, whom he would puzzle by sudden questions. If he thought a teacher incapable, he would give him gifts, but put him out of his office, and this apparently was resented. In architecture he was more than an amateur. The temple of Venus and Roma was constructed from his plans, and the buildings which he caused to be raised all over the Empire were extremely numerous and magnificent.[1] He was not a cruel man. At the beginning and end of his reign there were aristocratic conspiracies which he punished with severity. But once in Gaul, when a slave attempted to assassinate him, Hadrian seized the man, and, perceiving him to be mad, handed him over to the physicians to be cured.

Hadrian built many temples, including several to himself, a deity in whom he certainly did not believe.[2] He treated the Roman cults with punctilious respect and despised all foreign religions.[3] He was initiated at Eleusis, and pried into all mysteries, using even those magical arts which were forbidden by law. Like many men of his own time, and many even of ours, he was a superstitious sceptic. About a couple of centuries later Lampridius[4] attributes to Hadrian the establishment of certain temples which were remarkable as containing no divine images, and supposes that the Emperor meant to devote them to the worship of Christ.[5] This is probably an error. But Hadrian was certainly no bigot. He had seen too much of the world, he was too fond of laughing, and thought too much of practical efficiency, to be inclined to persecution. The gossiping anecdotists of the later Empire represent him as a bundle of contradictions. He was severe and he was gay, he was grave and he was wanton, he was cruel and he was lenient, he was penurious and he was liberal, and so on,[6] as if he was the incarnation of paradox. He seemed to them unintelligible, because disciplined energy, lively curiosity, and a keen sense of the absurd are too seldom combined in one character. It would be better for mankind

[1] Schiller, p. 624 sq. [2] *Vita*, 13. [3] *Vita*, 22.
[4] Lamp. *Vita Alex. Sev.* 43. [5] Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 441. [6] *Vita*, 14.

if it were not so, for it is a temperament at once pleasant and humane.

Hadrian must have possessed some fairly accurate information about Christianity. He knew Antioch before his accession, and his travels carried him to South Gaul, Athens, Asia, and Egypt. He was interested in religious curiosities, and in any or all of these places he would very probably hear talk of the new Church. There were Christians in the palace, and his confidential freedman and literary executor, Phlegon of Tralles, knew so much of the New Testament that he recorded the eclipse at the Crucifixion, which lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour, and attributed prophetical powers to Jesus.[1] The fact that Quadratus addressed to Hadrian his Apology, the first piece of the kind, shows at any rate that great hopes were entertained that the clement and intelligent Emperor would deal mercifully with the Christians.[2]

Finally the learned Bishop Meliton of Sardis,[3] in the third quarter of the second century, ascribes to Hadrian a number of rescripts forbidding his governors to molest the Church. One of these he says was directed to Fundanus, proconsul of Asia. About twenty years earlier than the time when Meliton was writing, Justin Martyr affixed to his Apology a copy of this rescript, of which a translation may here be given:—

'I received a dispatch written to me by the illustrious Serenus Granianus your predecessor, and I do not think it right to pass over his question in silence lest innocent people should be molested and an opportunity for the extortion of blackmail should be given to calumniators. Therefore if the provincials are ready to support their accusation against Christians in public and charge them with some definite offence in open court, I do not forbid them to take this course. But I do not permit them to use mere demands or cries in this matter. For it is far more just, if any one chooses to bring an accusation, that you should inquire into the charge alleged. If therefore any

[1] See Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 513 and reff.

[2] For Quadratus see Rendel Harris, *Aristides*, in *Texts and Studies*; Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 524; Harnack, *Chron.* i. 269.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 26. 10.

one lays an information and proves that the aforesaid people are doing anything against law, you are to award penalties according to the degree of the offence. But in good sooth you must look to it that if anybody denounces one of them without grounds you punish him severely according to the measure of his rascality.'[1]

It would appear that Silvanus Granianus (whose name is not quite correctly given in the text) had been alarmed by anonymous accusations or popular clamour, in the streets or in the amphitheatre, directed against the Christians, and thereupon wrote to the Emperor for instructions. His term of office expired before a reply could be sent, and the rescript was directed to C. Minucius Fundanus, his successor. Granianus and Fundanus had been consuls suffect, the former in 106, the latter in 107, and in the normal course of things they would succeed to a province after an interval of about seventeen years. The date of the rescript, therefore, will be 124 or thereabouts.

It will be observed that neither of these proconsuls appears to have heard of the rescript of Trajan to Pliny. Nor indeed does Hadrian himself; at any rate, he frames his directions upon quite independent lines. He agrees with Trajan that anonymous or merely tumultuary charges are not to be admitted, and insists that there must be a responsible accuser. To this extent he follows in the footsteps of his predecessor. But he goes on to rule that the accusation of Christianity by itself is insufficient, and that the informer must in every case allege some definite illegality. He was perhaps thinking mainly of those moral enormities into which Pliny had inquired, but his words go beyond this, and would include any overt act of sedition or sacrilege, anything that was or might lead to a breach of the peace. Further, the law against calumny is to be severely enforced. Unless the *delator* can make out some reasonable case, unless he can show that his charge is not absolutely groundless, he is to pay the usual penalties.

In short, the rescript is all but equivalent to a decree of toleration. It would still be possible for a malignant man

[1] Just. *Apol.* c. 68.

to entrap a Christian into some act of disrespect to Caesar in his divine capacity; indeed there were many crimes into which a hot-headed believer might be pushed with a little ingenuity. But the rescript concedes the main points. The 'mere name' is no longer a crime in itself, and the burden of proof is shifted from the shoulders of the Christian on to those of the informer.

This is so nearly all that the Apologists claimed that the genuineness of the rescript has been gravely suspected on this very account. But it is so strongly attested that it cannot be condemned as spurious. Nor is there any strong presumption that should lead us to regard the rescript as impossible. There was not at this time any definite law against Christianity. The new religion could only be attacked either directly, as immoral, or obliquely, through its exclusiveness, by the application of tests which it was known that Christians could not accept. All that was necessary was to forbid or to suspend the use of these tests. Jews were not required to submit to them, and Hadrian may well have thought them useless in the case of Christians.

At any rate, during the reign of Hadrian the Church was suffered to exist in peace. Some late and romancing tales profess to record the sufferings of Christians at this time, but they are incredible in themselves and are unknown to Eusebius or any earlier writer.[1] Telesphorus, Bishop of Rome, undoubtedly died for the faith, but his martyrdom probably fell in the first year of Antoninus Pius.

Another event which concerns us nearly is the revolt of Barcochba.

We have seen above how after the victory of Titus the Messianic hope, the national pride, and the unquenchable yearning for home rule were sedulously fostered by the new Sanhedrim. For nearly half a century the unfortunate Jews, shattered and scattered by that terrible catastrophe, did not venture to appeal again to the sword. But they were strong in Babylon and the countries about the Euphrates, and when Trajan advanced in the East their

[1] Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 486 sqq.

warlike youths gladly embraced the opportunity of enlisting in the armies by which the detested Romans were opposed. Encouraged by this example and by the absence of the Emperor on his distant and dangerous campaign, the Jews of Egypt, Cyrene, and Cyprus broke out into open rebellion (116 A.D.). There ensued a desperate struggle. Lupus, the governor of Egypt, was defeated in a regular battle ; there were frightful massacres, and the city of Alexandria was almost destroyed. Trajan was compelled to send one of his best officers, Q. Marcius Turbo, who at last succeeded in suppressing the insurrection. While Trajan was at Ctesiphon the Jews of Mesopotamia again took up arms and threatened his lines of communication. Lusius Quietus, a Moorish prince in Roman service, was sent to sweep the rebels out of the province, a commission which he executed with ruthless severity. Peace was not thoroughly restored before the first year of Hadrian's reign.[1] But hitherto it would seem that the Jews of Palestine had not actually taken up arms.

What motives induced them thus to remain quiet while there was at any rate a distant hope of success, and then when their brothers in Mesopotamia and Egypt had been utterly broken to stake all upon a desperate single-handed contest with the undivided forces of the Empire, we cannot say with certainty. The varying accounts appear to confuse the reasons with the results of the insurrection. According to Spartian, Hadrian had forbidden the national rite of circumcision,[2] but this statement has probably no other foundation than the fact that Antoninus Pius severely restricted though he did not actually prohibit the custom. According to Dio Cassius, Hadrian had actually established the Roman town of Aelia on the site of the sacred city.[3] But it is hardly credible that so politic a ruler would inflict this bitter degradation upon a people who seemed to have renounced all idea of resistance and had welcomed his accession with joy.[4]

[1] Schürer, *Gesch. d. Jüdischen Volkes*, i. 666.

[2] *Vita*, 14. [3] Dio Cass. 69. 12.

[4] *Or. Sib.* v. 46 sqq. Schürer, p. 682, thinks that both Spartian's account

If Hadrian really carried out at this time a measure so certain to cause war as the profanation of Mount Zion, he must have been sadly ignorant of the history and character of the Jews. But the mind of the people was sore and undecided, and they were whipped into a mad resolution by the advent of a Messiah.

This was Simon, who by the Rabbinists is called Barcosiba, from Cosiba his father or from his dwelling-place. After his miserable downfall his dupes or his enemies invented a new etymology for his name, which they interpreted as meaning 'Son of a Lie'. To Christian writers he is known as Barcochba, 'Son of a Star.' Some of his coins bear the device of a star above a temple, a Messianic symbol referring to the prophecy of Balaam,[1] which the famous Rabbi Akiba applied to Simon. Other coins bear the legend of 'Eleasar the Priest', who appears to have acted as Simon's colleague during the first year of the war. Thus the three leaders of the revolt which was to break the disciplined might of Rome and set up Jerusalem as the capital of the world were a Mahdi, a priest, and a professor of theology.

What followed was not a series of regular campaigns, but a guerrilla war in which groups of desperate men issued forth from their dens in the hills, combined to strike a sudden blow, and scattered again to their secret hiding-places. For a moment the rebels appear to have been masters of Jerusalem; they may even have attempted to rebuild the Temple. But it was not their policy to invite a siege or offer a pitched battle. The Romans were taken unawares, and the troops upon the spot were unable to cope with the insurrection. But large forces under Hadrian's best general were poured into Palestine as fast as they could be moved up. Even the fleet took part in the operations. Finally Julius Severus, one of the most distinguished officers of the time, was summoned from Britain to take the

and Dio's can be defended. He believes that Hadrian's motive for building Aelia was not hostility to Judaism, but merely the desire to create a magnificent new city, as he had done elsewhere. But Hadrian must have been well aware of the feelings with which the Jews regarded Zion.

[1] Num. xxiv. 17.

supreme command, and by sweeping the country as it were with a net succeeded in breaking down all resistance. The survivors gathered together in the mountain fastness of Bitther ;[1] the place was carried by assault, and Barcochba fell into the hands of the Romans. He was of course put to death, and with him perished Akiba. Thus ended the revolt, which had lasted about three years and a half (132–135).

The losses on both sides were enormous. The number of Jews who perished or were sold as slaves was incalculable, and so many Romans fell that in the dispatch announcing the final victory to the Senate Hadrian omitted the usual formula, 'I and the army are well.'[2] Judaea became a mere desert, Jerusalem was made a Roman military colony under the name of Aelia Capitolina, the figure of a swine was carved on the lintel of the gate towards Bethlehem, the shrine of Jupiter Capitolinus was erected on the Temple area, that of Venus over the Holy Sepulchre.[3] Jews were forbidden, under penalty of death, to come within sight of Aelia.[4] By the time of Origen[5] this harsh rule had been modified by Constantine or his predecessors so far as that the Jews were allowed once a year to come and weep upon the site of the Temple on the ninth day of the month, and even for this melancholy privilege they were taxed. 'On that day,' says Jerome, 'when Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by the Romans, you may see the people come, a crowd of decrepit women and aged men, clothed in rags and weighed down by years, their persons and their garb testifying to the wrath of God. They flock together, poor wretches, and while the Cross of our Lord and the Church of the Resurrection sparkle and glitter, and from the Mount of Olives the banner of the Cross shines like a star, the piteous yet not pitiable nation bewail the ruin of their Temple. To this day their cheeks are bedewed with tears,

[1] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 6. The name is Beth-ther ; see Schürer, i. 693.

[2] Dio Cass. 69. 14; cp. Fronto, ed. Naber, p. 218.

[3] Jerome says the statue of Jupiter over the Holy Sepulchre, the statue of Venus on Calvary ; *Ep. lviii ad Paulin.* ed. Vallarsi, i, p. 319.

[4] Aristo of Pella in Eus. *H. E.* iv. 6.

[5] *In Iosuam*, Hom. xvii, Lom. xi. 152.

their limbs are yellow with age, their hair is dishevelled, and the soldier demands his bribe that they may weep a little longer.'[1] The exact size of their wailing-place is given by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux. 'There are there (on the site of the Temple) two statues of Hadrian, and not far from the statues a pierced stone (*lapis pertusus*) to which year by year come the Jews, to anoint it and mourn for themselves; they wail and tear their clothes, and so depart.'[2]

The results of the destruction of the Temple by Titus have been described in a previous chapter. The revolt against Hadrian intensified them. The Jews were definitely forbidden to exist as a nation, and threw themselves more ardently into the religious life. Jewish Hellenism, with its admiration for Gentile philosophy and its hopes of making the Law acceptable to the Western world, disappeared; Pharisaism and Rabbinism reigned supreme, and Jewish intelligence shifted its quarters from Alexandria to Babylon. Judaism renounced its claim to be the religion of the world, and its abdication was accepted. Down to the time of Juvenal it had fascinated many devout people even in Rome. But from the time of Hadrian it was entirely superseded by the new religions of Isis, Mithra, and Christ. Even the amiable Plutarch thought that the Jews were the children of the wicked Egyptian god Typho and worshipped his ass.[3] The Neo-platonists speak of the Jews as one of the inspired races, but without the least idea of adopting either their faith or their practices.

After the suppression of the revolt the Palestinian bishopric seems to have been transferred from Pella back to Aelia. But the properly Jewish Christians—they had been cruelly handled by Barcochba—appear to have dwindled considerably in numbers and influence. Many of them had probably fled into the lands beyond the Jordan, where they fell under strange influences; it is shortly after this time that we hear of the Ebionites. The bishops bear Gentile names, and their Church was predominantly a Gentile Church. Down to the

[1] Jerome, *ad Zeph.* i. 15 sq., ed. Vallarsi, vi, p. 692.

[2] *Itinera Hierosol.*, ed. Geyer, p. 22, in *Corp. Script. Eccl. Vindobonae*, vol. xxxviii.

[3] Cf. *de Is. et Os.* 31. On the Ass fable see Schürer, iii, pp. 104, 416.

time of Constantine they were still currently known as Bishops not of Jerusalem but of Aelia. The see began to lift up its head early in the third century, when Alexander founded a library in the city. Generally it appears as inferior in rank to Caesarea, the official capital of Palestine.[1] But Aelia was strong in the possession of the Holy Places, which from the last quarter of the second century attracted occasional visitors,[2] and in the reign of Constantine, by whom they were adorned with magnificent basilicas, drew crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the Christian world. The august traditions of the sacred city which had been the birthplace of the Church could not be permanently disregarded. The Council of Nicaea appears to have ordered that the Bishop of Aelia should be equal in dignity though not in jurisdiction with the Bishop of Caesarea.[3] In the next century we find the Bishop of Jerusalem, as he is now styled, above the Bishop of Caesarea, and claiming independence of the diocesan Bishop of Antioch. The Council of Ephesus (431) rejected his pretensions, but they were allowed by the Emperor Theodosius II. Finally, at the Council of Chalcedon (451), the Bishop of Jerusalem was recognized as supreme head of the three ecclesiastical provinces of Palestine, and thus attained to the dignity of a Patriarch.[4]

[1] Harnack, *Die Mission des Christentums*, p. 418 sq.
[2] *Journal of Theological Studies*, i. 551.
[3] *Conc. Nic.* vii, in Hard. *Conc.* i. 326.
[4] *Conc. Chalc.* Seventh Session, Hard. ii. 491.

CHAPTER XII

GNOSTICISM

The second century is the palmy age of Gnosticism. From the time of Hadrian onwards this peculiar form of belief became in certain districts, especially in Egypt and the East, a formidable rival to Christianity, produced many influential teachers and a great volume of writings, and ramified into numerous sects.

It had existed in less developed shapes for some considerable time before. In the New Testament we read of Simon Magus in the Book of Acts; in the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul refers to certain people who worshipped angels and observed ascetic rules; in the Pastorals he speaks of 'fables and endless genealogies',[2] of faithless men who forbade marriage and abstained from meats, apparently upon the ground that they were not the creation of God,[3] and who apparently also maintained that God is not the Saviour of all men.[4] Two of their teachers may have been Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom the Apostle had excommunicated.[5] In the Letters to the Seven Churches we read of a sect called Nicolaitans, of a prophetess whom the author styles Jezebel, and of people who call themselves Jews and are not Jews. The author says that they commit fornication, either literally, or as being heretics; that they eat things sacrificed to idols; and that they profess to know 'depths' or mysteries, which, as they are not those of Christ, must be those of Satan. Other false teachers who may or may not

[1] See articles on Gnosticism, on *Pistis Sophia*, and on the several Gnostic leaders in *D. C. B.*; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*: *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur*: *Chronologie*; Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Litteratur*. On the Apocryphal Acts and Gospels, Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 169; Hennecke, *Neu. Test. Apokrypha*; Bardenhewer as above; Karl Schmidt, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band xxiv; *Acta Pauli*: Burkitt, *J. T. S.* vol. i. 280; ii. 492; iii. 94. The texts of the Apocryphal Gospels may be read in Tischendorf's edition, those of the Apocryphal Acts in that of Lipsius and Bonnet.

[2] 1 Tim. i. 4. [3] 1 Tim. iv. 3. [4] 1 Tim. iv. 10. [5] 1 Tim. i. 20.

have been tinged with Gnostical opinions are denounced in the Second Epistle of Peter and in Jude. Again, in the First and Second Epistles of John,[1] we read of spirits which 'confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh'. These are probably prophets who taught that the Saviour's body was not real, but merely apparent, and in the Gospel of St. Luke[2] we find an emphatic warning against the error. A few years later, as we learn from the Epistles of Ignatius, Docetism was openly taught in Antioch. The Gnostic doctor, Saturnilus, was about that time actively employed in that city.

It is hardly possible to classify the Gnostic sects on any enlightening principle; they are so numerous, and the details are so various and so obscure. Certain groups or families may be distinguished, but even within them the diversities are so great that they must be left to the special student. Perhaps the best mode of division is the geographical. We can, though rather loosely, ascertain in what regions the several sects arose, and thus gain some sort of idea what intellectual influences were in each case at work. On this principle we may divide the sects into three great orders. The Samaritan includes the names of Dositheus, Simon Magus, Menander, and Cleobius. All these belong to the first century; Dositheus may even be pre-Christian. To Syria belong Saturnilus, a number of obscure sects known as Naassenes (Ophites, or serpent worshippers), Peratae, and Sethiani, perhaps Tatian with the Encratites, and perhaps Bardesanes. To Egypt, Cerinthus, Valentinus, Basilides, Carpocrates. Marcion came from Pontus. The Samaritans are of little historical consequence. Simon Magus is interesting chiefly as the hero of a cycle of legends which were spun about him in the first half of the second century, when he was identified with the old Sabine god Semo Sancus, who had a shrine and statue in the island of the Tiber, and was believed to have fled from Palestine to Rome, pursued by St Peter.[3] Finally it was said he attempted to fly from the top of a high tower as a proof of his divine mission, but, the demon who supported him being frightened away by the prayers

[1] 1 John iv. 2; 2 John 7. [2] xxiv. 39–43. [3] Justin, *Apol.* i. 26.

of the Apostle, fell to the ground and so perished miserably. Of the Syrians, Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr the Apologist, and compiler of the *Diatessaron,* is indeed reckoned a Gnostic by Irenaeus, but appears to have agreed with the sectarians only on a few subordinate points; while Bardesanes, a most remarkable figure, courtier, philosopher, hymn-writer, perhaps apostle of Edessa, though said to have been at one time of his life a Valentinian, was hardly known in Europe.[1] Of the Egyptians, Cerinthus was believed by the so-called Alogi to have been the real author of the Fourth Gospel and of the Apocalypse. Basilides and Valentinus were the great system-makers. The Museum of Alexandria was the most illustrious school of the time, the natural meeting-place of Asiatic, Egyptian, and European speculation. Hence the two great heresiarchs exhibit a certain acquaintance with Greek philosophy which, distorted as it is, sufficed to raise them above the heads of their brethren.

Gnosticism was taught in Rome by Cerdon, Valentinus, Marcion, and Marcellina between 130 and 140. In the time of Irenaeus it was strongly rooted in Gaul along the lower valley of the Rhone. How long it endured in the province we do not know, but in Rome it maintained its ground. About the middle of the third century there were certain Roman Gnostics headed by two otherwise unknown teachers, Adelphius and Aquilinus.[2] From the end of the third century Gnosticism was superseded in the West by Manichaeism. In the East it had a longer life. Valentinians and Marcionites are condemned in a law against heretics dated 428 and addressed to the prefect of the Orient. Theodoret found a considerable number of Marcionites in his diocese of Cyrrhus, but was able to boast

[1] On Bardesanes, or Bardaisan, see Dr. Hort's article in *Dict. of Christ. Biog.* and Mr. Burkitt's *Early Eastern Christianity.*

[2] See Porphyrius, *Vita Plotini,* 16. These Gnostics thought that Plotinus had not fathomed 'the depth', relying upon certain so-called revelations of Zoroaster, Zostrianus, and others. Amelius wrote forty-six books against Zostrianus, Porphyry wrote several against Zoroaster. Plotinus himself directed against these Gnostics: *Enn.* ii. 9. Some of his friends had joined this sect.

to Pope Leo in 449 that he had brought them all over to the orthodox Church. Manichaeism maintained itself without producing a single eminent teacher from the time of Diocletian to that of the Albigensian War. Indeed, in all its shapes, from first to last Gnosticism never rose above the level of the middle class.

The rise of Gnosticism called forth a burst of literary activity on the part of the Church. Many of these treatises have disappeared, those for instance of Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, and Agrippa Castor. But we still possess the elaborate work of Irenaeus, some books of Tertullian, and the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus, with some valuable notices in Clement of Alexandria; a later group of anti-Gnostic writers is formed by the writer who is commonly called the pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius, Philastrius, and Theodoret. Few of these authors, perhaps only Irenaeus, Epiphanius, and Theodoret, had any personal acquaintance with Gnosticism as a living system; most of their knowledge is derived from Gnostic books, which they did not care to make too intelligible, and some of them do little more than copy their predecessors.[1] Clement of Alexandria writes of the hated sectaries with some measure of sympathy and some desire to get at their real meaning. Origen also makes large extracts from Heracleon's Commentary on St. John's Gospel, and treats the author with natural hostility yet without unfairness.

Of the teeming Gnostic literature we possessed until recently little beyond the extracts embodied in the writings of Catholic opponents or critics. Latterly Egypt has yielded a great number of manuscripts, chiefly Coptic, of which the most important is that commonly called the *Pistis Sophia*.[2] Of Gnostic commentaries upon the Gospels the voluminous work of Basilides has perished except for

[1] The lost work of Justin Martyr *against Marcion* was known to Irenaeus. The work of Irenaeus was used by Hippolytus, and the Syntagma of Hippolytus was largely used by later writers. The book itself is lost, but its contents have been ingeniously reconstructed by Lipsius, *Quellenkritik der Epiphanios*: cp. Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 220 sqq.

[2] *Gesch. d. altchrist. Litt.* 171 sqq., 918; *Chron.* i. 533, 712; Duchesne, *Histoire de l'Église*, i. 191 sq.

a few lines; of Heracleon, that on St. John's Gospel may be fairly well estimated from the notices in Origen, of that on St. Luke one passage has been preserved by Clement. But the Gnostics were active in the composition of scriptures of their own, and of this branch of their work we have considerable remains in apocryphal Gospels and Acts, which, though they have been remodelled to an unknown extent, still suffice to give us a clear idea of the purposes and methods of their original authors.

What was the real root of Gnosticism? We shall approach this question best by the way of Plutarch's Essay on Isis and Osiris. The great problem of the time for religious pagans, especially for Greeks and for those who were turning away from Stoicism to Platonism, was how to reconcile the belief in a good God with the existence of evil in the soul of man, and of imperfection, or of what we consider imperfection, in the constitution of Nature. Some sought an answer in the antagonism between Mind, which is good, and Matter, which is evil; the body, they said, is the hell of the soul[1]; others, in the new distinction between the gods, who were good, and the demons, who were of mixed or evil nature. Plato, in one of his latest works,[2] had ventured to suggest that there might be an evil personality in matter. Plutarch adopted this as a tenet. 'The universe,' he says, 'is not devoid of mind or reason; it is not without a pilot, nor is it driven to and fro by chance. Yet there is not one Reason which rules and guides as with a helm or bridle. There is not one Lord, who ladles good and evil out of two tubs; but there are two opposing principles and two hostile powers, one leading straight to the right, the other bending and upsetting all things. Hence life and the world are mixed, if not altogether, yet so far as concerns this earth beneath the moon.'[3] He thought also that there might be three physical divisions of mankind, one naturally good, one naturally evil, one of mixed character, capable of becoming wholly good or wholly evil. For this view also support was to be found in Plato and Aristotle. Plutarch again made free use of allegory;

[1] *De Is. et Os.* 28. [2] *Laws*, 898 B. C. [3] *De Is. et Os.* 45; cf. 49.

the myths, he said, were like the rainbow which refracts and colours the pure light of the sun.[1] He speaks also of a genealogy or descending chain of divine beings. This notion he derived partly from Greek poetry and philosophy, partly from Mithra and Isis.

Plutarch appealed also to the Greek mysteries and the esoteric teaching of Greek priests.[2] But even his Greek witnesses seem to have been tinged in some degree by Orientalism. Plato himself was fascinated by the immemorial wisdom of the Nile. 'O Solon, Solon,' says the old Egyptian priest in the *Timaeus*, 'you Hellenes are but children,' and the same spell was laid more strongly upon Plutarch. He was attracted by Isis, and Mithra drew him with a still more powerful charm. The Persian creed seemed to be authorized by the immense antiquity of Zoroaster, who lived 5,000 years before the Trojan War. It taught that the world was made partly by the good Ormuzd, partly by the evil Ahriman, who are for ever at war with one another. By the latter were created all poisonous or mischievous beasts, birds, and reptiles; hence the best man is he who destroys most of these noxious things. Between Ormuzd and Ahriman stands Mithra, the Mediator by whom the age-long strife will finally be brought to a close. Then hell will be destroyed, and all men will be happy, needing no food, and casting no shadow.[3]

Further than this Plutarch could not go, because he was a Greek and an intelligent man. Being both, he understood quite clearly that, if he made the world altogether the work of the devil, he would destroy at once all art, all science, all reasonable religion, and all grounded morality. Therefore he kept Western knowledge and Eastern mysticism in a sort of balance, and taught only a strictly limited pessimism. But the Gnostics, being neither Greek nor intelligent, took without hesitation the plunge from which Plutarch shrank, and regarded the Creation as altogether due to an evil spirit. None, they maintained, but a presumptuous or ignorant or rebellious deity could have been guilty of so wicked an act as, by uniting mind to matter,

[1] *De Is. et Os.* 20. [2] *De Is. et Os.* 45. [3] *De Is. et Os.* 46, 47.

and generally better things to worse things, to have caused so much sin and suffering as prevails in this world. It was necessary even for them to leave some thread of connexion between the Supreme God, who is all wisdom and beneficence, and this miserable godless creation. This they effected by supposing that some men possess intelligence, which comes down straight from God. Others have at least so much reason as may incline them to listen to truth when they hear it, while others are no better than the beasts that perish.

Thus the only way left open to Religion is pure mysticism, a mysticism which is not kindled, or informed, or supported in any way by art, knowledge, or duty, for all these are inextricably connected with the world of sense. No Greek ever taught that the world is the work of an evil Creator. It is Orientalism of the most debased type; pessimism as unmixed as that inhuman doctrine can be made, no less repugnant to the heathen philosopher Plotinus than to the Christian doctors.

The Cosmogonies are merely attempts to explain how from the Supreme God there could emanate a Being so foolish as to act the part of Demiurge or Creator. This question the Gnostics attempted to answer not by way of reasoning, but by that of mythology. Imagine a long chain of divine creatures, each weaker than its parent, and we come at last to one who, while powerful enough to create, is silly enough not to see that creation is wrong.

It is needless to go into the Genealogies in detail. They were necessarily absurd, and were therefore discarded by Marcion, the most intelligent of the Gnostic teachers, by Apelles, and by Carpocrates.[1] Let it only be observed that, among these supernatural beings, a place was easily found for the heathen gods, and that of some we can hardly say whether they were merely attributes of God or true divine persons. Lastly the Aeons, as they were commonly called,

[1] On Marcion see Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, B. i. c. 5. He agreed with the Gnostics in dualism, docetism, and rejection of the Old Testament. In theology he was strongly Pauline. For his criticism of the New Testament see Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*. For Apelles, his disciple, see Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, ch. ix. p. 148 sqq.

appear in religion as guardian angels, or as heavenly doubles of men and women upon earth. Probably it was in this character that the ordinary Gnostics believed in them. Thus Heracleon taught that the husband, who was not the husband, of the Samaritan Woman, was her *pleroma* or heavenly complement. The same belief is glanced at by Irenaeus,[1] and expressed by Theodotus, who explained a difficult phrase of St. Paul[2] to mean that the Aeons are baptized for the dead, that is to say for us men who are 'dead' in sin.[3] They came down with Jesus for our salvation, and pray for us that we may enter into heaven with them, for without us they themselves cannot enter in.[4] The same idea forms the motive of the remarkable *Hymn of the Soul* in the *Acts of Thomas*,[5] and we have a still more remarkable epitaph placed by a Roman Valentinian upon the grave of his young wife: 'Thou didst hasten to behold the divine visages of the Aeons, the great Angel of the great Council, the true Son, passing into the bride-chamber, and pressing on into the fatherly bosom of the Aeons.'[6] Such passages prove that the Valentinian Aeons were not purely metaphysical, and serve to explain that 'worship of angels' which St. Paul rebukes in the Epistle to the Colossians. It is probable that the term Aeon was borrowed by Valentinus from St. Paul.[7]

The cardinal doctrine, that the world was created by an evil Demiurge, is not Greek, and is so evidently not Christian that we wonder how any man with even a glimmering of sense could have attempted to tack it on to the Gospel. So violent a combination, such a *tour de force* of what is called Syncretism, could only be effected by an equally violent method of exegesis. This was discovered in Allegorism, the theological alchemy by which anything can be transmuted into anything else. It was a heathen art, as yet hardly known to Christians, though they soon began to employ it in order to smooth away the difficulties of the Old

[1] iii. 15. 2. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 29. [3] *Exc. ex Theod.* 22. [4] Ib. 35.
[5] *Act. Thom.*, ed. Bonnet, 1903, pp. 219 sqq.
[6] *C. I. G.* 9595 a, p. 594, quoted by Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, p. 146.
[7] See Lightfoot's note on Ignatius, *Eph.* xix.

Testament. The Gnostics used it with great freedom in order to foist their pessimism into the Gospels and into the Epistles of St. Paul. For the Hebrew Scriptures they did not require its aid. Here it was their obvious policy to bring out all those difficulties which we know so well into the strongest light. The more imperfections they could discover the easier it was to argue that the God of the Jews, the Creator, was Himself an imperfect being. Let us consider first what they made of the New Testament, or rather of the Christian Creed.

God, they maintained, is the Absolute, the Unknown and Unknowable. In this, unfortunately, there were Christians who agreed with them, misled by Pythagoreanism and Neoplatonism. The Gnostics added that He is wholly good and beneficent. This it is not easy to dispute. But the Gnostics drew from this the conclusion that He cannot be the Creator, and that He cannot be the Moral Governor of the world, inasmuch as a Being who is purely good can neither reward, or rather bribe, nor punish. But though unknown, He has been pleased to reveal Himself in Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven, became in a sense man, and appeared in this alien world in order to undo the folly of Creation, to separate what never ought to have been united, and take back to heaven those who were capable of receiving Him.

Roughly speaking, the Gnostics received the whole of the Gospel narrative down to but not including the Crucifixion. Cerinthus, indeed, and Carpocrates believed that our Lord was the son of Joseph; Marcion probably believed that He was not the son of Mary, but came down from heaven to earth without any human birth at all. But the bulk of the Gnostics accepted without reserve the narrative of the Miraculous Birth, as given by St. Matthew and St. Luke. The Valentinians paid even extravagant honour to the Virgin Mother. One of the main peculiarities in their exegesis of the Gospels was their Docetism. They could not believe that our Lord's flesh was formed of ordinary matter, because to their mind this would have been tantamount to saying that He was not sinless. Hence they maintained that His Human Nature was merely phantasmal, that He did not really live on ordi-

nary food, that His foot left no print upon the dust, that He could not be angry or troubled in spirit, and in particular that He could not die upon the Cross. Some held that Simon of Cyrene was crucified in His place; some that His Spirit departed before the Cross was set up, and that His enemies wreaked their vengeance upon the mere semblance of His body, while He Himself looked down upon the idle tragedy from the Mount of Olives, where He was holding serene converse with St. John. One serious consequence of Docetism was that no Gnostic could admit the Resurrection of the Body. It is clear also that no Docetist could attach any religious value to the Passion of our Lord, or to any aspect of His Humiliation. Yet in the Valentinian system the Cross, called also Horos, or the Boundary, is an Aeon closing in and guarding the first thirty Aeons who form the Pleroma, or fullness of God. Horos is styled the Redeemer,[1] and through him Christ, at the consummation of all things, leads His faithful into the bride-chamber, that is to say, into the Father's bosom.[2] In this peculiar sense the Gnostic hoped to attain salvation through the Cross.

As to the Personality of our Lord, the myths of the sects were so many and so various that it is really impossible to combine them in one intelligible account. Their object was to bring Him into some degree of sympathy with the created world, while at the same time keeping Him in close relation with the sovereign unknown God. Thus, according to the Valentinians, He was formed by the union of two Aeons. There was a lower Jesus, an emanation of the Demiurge and his mother Achamoth (*Hachmuth*), and therefore merely psychic, possessing, that is, only the lower mental faculties, understanding but not reason. It was this psychic Jesus who was born of the Virgin, passing through her 'as water through a pipe'.[3] Upon Him at the baptism descended the higher Jesus, called also Saviour, Christ, and Word, who is the perfect fruit, the beauty and star of the whole Pleroma,[4]

[1] Iren. i. 2. 2.

[2] *Exc. ex Theod.* 64; see also the explanation of the Cross given in the *Acta Iohannis*, ed. Zahn, pp. 222–3.

[3] Iren. i. 7. 2. [4] Iren. i. 2. 6.

who had felt compassion for Achamoth in her sorrow. Thus Valentinus struggled to explain the divinity, and as much as he could understand of the humanity of Christ. But there were other Gnostic teachers who were Sabellians, and identified Christ with the Father. We find this opinion in the *Acts of John*, and it was possibly held also by Marcion.

From what has been said it will be gathered that the work of the Redeemer was not to perfect human nature, but to undo the great mistake of Creation. He gathers to Himself the 'Spiritual' who are 'naturally saved'; to the Psychic or men of understanding He offers knowledge which they may receive or reject; for the Hylic, the sensual, who have neither reason nor understanding, He can do nothing at all. It was this fatalism which, of all the Gnostic tenets, next to Dualism, gave the greatest offence to the Christian doctors. Some of the sectarians modified this harsh view, and held that each soul will go in the end to that abode which suits it best. The good will rise to one or other of the many heavens; those who are fit only for earth will remain in the region of sense, immortal, but knowing and seeking nothing better than earth, 'that they may not be tortured with impossibilities, like fish desiring to live upon the mountain-top, for this desire was what destroyed them.' Thus in the Kingdom of God, as in the ideal State of Plato, Reason will be at the top, Logical Understanding in the middle, and Emotion at the bottom, and none will wish to be in any other place—none will even know that there is any other place. This is 'the Great Ignorance', which is eternal peace.[1]

When Basilides wrote these words he was thinking of the Platonic conception of justice. The passage illustrates the Oriental way in which the Gnostics understood the philosophy of the Greeks. It exhibits also their fatal trick of dividing everything, and regarding each part of a whole as an independent, concrete, and even hostile entity—God and the Creator; the many heavens and earth; reason, logic, and emotion; mind and matter; the Old Testament and the New. Always they distinguish without attempting to unite. They had some critical but no philosophical capacity, and could

[1] Kipp. *Phil.* vii. 27.

therefore never attain to a rational explanation of anything.

Of the manner in which the Gnostics interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures, the best example is to be found in the Epistle of Ptolemy to Flora.[1] Some, says the author, believe that the Law was given by God, others that it was given by the devil; but both are wrong. Our Saviour Himself teaches us that it comes from three sources, Moses, the Elders, and God. Moses gave certain precepts out of his own head; thus, he permitted divorce because of the hardness of men's hearts, though 'from the beginning it was not so'. The Elders defeated the commandments by their own tradition.[2] What are we to say of the Law of God? This again falls into three divisions. We have that Law which the Saviour came not to destroy but to fulfil, the Decalogue. Again, there are precepts which are not wholly good, for instance, 'an eye for an eye.' Again, there is the Law of types and ceremonies; these last our Saviour spiritualized. Who then was the author of this divine Law? Not the Father, but the Demiurge, a being of middle nature, neither good nor evil. He may be called just, and is in a sense an image of the Father, though begotten, hylic and divided. 'We can show you all this,' Ptolemy tells Flora in conclusion, 'by our apostolical tradition, if you are found worthy.' The same kind of criticism was applied to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Gnostics asserted (and this was the historical weakness of their position) that their doctrine of God had been delivered to them by certain of the Apostles by secret oral tradition. When challenged to produce them, they fabricated books bearing the names of Apostles, such as the *Traditions of Matthias* or the *Acts of John*.

It will be observed that the Gnostics were acute enough to discover those difficulties which lie upon the face of the Old Testament, and that they did not attempt to explain them away by allegorism, as Origen did. Further, that they had no historical sense, and made no allowance for growth in morality. Nor did they care to study the interaction of

[1] Preserved in Epiph. *Haer.* 33. 3–7. [2] Matt. xv. 3; Mark vii. 10.

spirit and flesh, or the degrees of inspiration. They must have credit for perceiving a most formidable problem, which they attacked with courage and sincerity, but without learning and without intelligence. Here, as in everything, they made it clear that they had no constructive power.

It was far from easy on the Gnostic theory to construct a system of morality. If there are three kinds of men there ought to be three rules of conduct. Again, if spirit is absolutely distinct from matter, and the body is merely the prison of the soul, it would seem to follow that sin is like dirt upon the face, which may be washed off at any moment, and that it cannot affect the character. Two opposite conclusions may be drawn—that we ought to hate the flesh and all its desires, which is asceticism ; or that it does not matter what we do, which is antinomianism.

Antinomianism comes naturally to vulgar fanatics at all times, and no doubt there was much of this evil spirit among the Gnostics. Many of them used magic ; many of them, again, kept prophetesses about them, and these neurotic creatures were sometimes led astray. Irenaeus, from his own personal experience, makes grave charges of this kind against Marcus.[1] Clement of Alexandria, a temperate witness, says that many of the Basilidians were loose in their morals, though the teaching of their founder was free from blame.[2] He brings the same charge also against the Nicolaitans.[3] But the Marcionites and many other sects were distinguished for the austerity of their lives, and the Church teachers found no little difficulty in condemning Gnostic rigours while defending their own. Indeed, asceticism did not attain free course in the Church till Gnosticism ceased to be dangerous.

The only teachers who openly advocated a theory which leads directly to licentiousness were Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes, a beautiful and gifted boy, who died in early youth, and was worshipped as a demigod at Same, in Cephallenia.[4] They were the most pagan and the most modern of

[1] i. 13. 3.
[2] *Strom.* iii. 1. 2.
[3] *Strom.* iii. 4. 25, 26 ; compare also the Apocalypse, ii. 6, 15.
[4] *Strom.* iii. 2. 1–9.

the Gnostics. Indeed, they were not so much Gnostics as Anarchists. They taught that God made the world and the devil made law. God's gifts, said Epiphanes, are all good, and as free to all men as air and sunshine. 'The vine rejects neither the sparrow nor the thief.' Law creates property and property creates sin. But for private hoards of money there would be no theft; but for marriage there would be no adultery. St. Anselm, the monks generally, and John Wyclif preached a similar doctrine, but they guarded themselves by adding that what is true of the state of innocence is not true of fallen nature; nor would they have extended the notion of property to wives. Epiphanes does not appear to have made any reserves. Clement of Alexandria charges the Carpocratians with unbridled licentiousness even in their religious meetings.[1] Irenaeus had heard of this charge, but did not believe it.[2] Indeed, such open misconduct would hardly have been tolerated by the imperial police. But the doctrine of Epiphanes would certainly not conduce to moral purity.

Docetism, and the Gnostic view of all punishment as the ordinance not of God but of the Demiurge, would seem to make it impossible to attach any moral value to pain in general, or to the Crucifixion in particular. Yet Basilides explained suffering by catching at the Platonic theory that it is the divinely ordained medicine for sin. At once he was met by the formidable objection, What then shall we say of the suffering of babes? He replied, that though the babe had done no wrong the sinful inclination was there, and that the inclination deserved the same punishment as the act. In this Basilides was more Augustinian than Augustine himself. But there is a second objection. What of the martyr? The same answer is made. The martyr is a potential murderer or adulterer. Therefore his death is deserved, but God, out of pure mercy, allows him to suffer in the eyes of the world as a Christian. 'And if you press me with instances,' adds Basilides, 'saying that So-and-So suffered, yet was no sinner, I tell you that any man you choose to name was still a man, but that God is just.'[3] God here must mean the Demiurge. Clement of Alexandria thought that

[1] *Strom.* iii. 2. 10. [2] *Haer.* i. 25. 5. [3] *Strom.* iv. 12.

the Gnostic was here denying the sinlessness of our Lord, but Basilides was a Docetist, and therefore could not allow that Christ suffered at all. His view of suffering certainly would not encourage martyrdom, and according to Irenaeus [1] he maintained that Simon of Cyrene was crucified in place of Jesus, and that therefore to confess the Crucified One was to confess a delusion. Heracleon the Valentinian [2], though he did not approve of wilful martyrdom, said that those who denied Christ before the magistrate were not in Christ, and the sect of Marcion produced many martyrs.

It is easy to see why the Church of the second century regarded Gnosticism with the utmost dislike and with exaggerated fear. The fear was exaggerated because Gnosticism was opposed at once to history, common sense, and morality. Certainly it would have destroyed Christianity if it had prevailed, but it was not possible that it should prevail. If we regard it simply in its relation to the Creed, it might admit of some kind of defence. The Gnostics have been called the first theologians, not wholly without reason. It was in one aspect an attempt to explain the belief of the Church, though by arbitrary and fruitless methods. Their fault lay in their additions to the Creed, in their contention that these additions were far more important than the Creed, and in fact that Knowledge or Faith, without which no man can be saved, was not possessed by the Church at all. These additions were in the main a squalid form of Orientalism, as repugnant to educated heathens as to the Christians. What could Westerns make of Abrasax or Ialdabaoth, of Carphakasemeiocheir or Ekkabakara, of Kaulakau or Ipsantachounchainchoucheeoch, or of the gibberish with which Gnostic prayers are commonly interlarded? A glance at the *Pistis Sophia* is enough to show how barbaric was the circle in which the book took shape. What Hellenism there was in the minds of these men—if we except Marcion, and perhaps Carpocrates and his son—was the merest veneer, hardly to be detected except by an expert. It is only by glimpses that we discover any intelligible thought at all. But the Church of the second century rang with alarm, and the con-

[1] *Haer.* i. 24. 4. [2] Quoted by Clem. Al., *Strom.* iv. 9.

sequence was that all the Christian writers of that period, except Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, shrank with horror from the very name of philosophy. This was an error, for it was only by civilized thought that an answer could be found to the problems raised by Gnosticism. It was the Alexandrines who put the Church upon the right road.

But in the second century the Church was still young, and not fully conscious of her own strength. The New Testament was new, and not as yet firmly established. Apocryphal scriptures were produced in great numbers, and the authentic books were liable to interpolations and omissions. Further, the rules of sane criticism or exegesis were almost unknown, either in the Church or out of it. The best course for the Church to take was that which it actually adopted—to insist that their own apostolical tradition was the right explanation of Scripture on all the matters in dispute, and that this tradition could be learned from its inheritors, the commissioned clergy. This solved nothing, but at any rate it maintained the truth.

One question still remains. How far did Gnosticism affect the Church? Negatively, as we have seen, by disinclining the Christian teachers for philosophy, and by strengthening the hands of the hierarchy. But did it succeed in any degree in gaining a footing within the Church?

The answer to this must depend mainly upon the view taken of the apocryphal Acts and Gospels. Some of them are Gnostic, some Catholic, some are Catholic revisions of Gnostic originals, and it is occasionally not easy to say to which of these classes a given document belongs.[1]

[1] Lately it has been maintained that many of the Apocrypha are really vulgar Christian, and this view has been taken even of the *Acts of John*, the most Gnostical of all. This is the opinion of Karl Schmidt, approved by Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 173. The *Acts* teach Dualism, Docetism, and Sabellianism, with many other singular features. See M. R. James in *Texts and Studies*, vol. v; Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. The *Acts of John* are strongly Gnostic. At the same time there were 'vulgar Christians', who hovered on the border, more or less, of Gnosticism; thus we learn from the history of Origen that there were Catholics at Alexandria who attended the church of the Gnostic Paul: and it appears that the semi-Gnostic influence of Tatian and Bardesanes upon the church at Edessa was for some time powerful. See Mr. Burkitt's *Early Eastern Christianity*.

The most general characteristic of the whole family is that of romance. Many of them—for instance, the Acts of John and Philip and of Thomas—are really religious novels, the first of their kind. It is probable that the idea of combining instruction with amusement belongs to the Gnostics, but it was soon copied by the other party. Before the end of the second century an Asiatic priest composed the romantic tale of Paul and Thekla, and was deposed for his audacity. But the desire for light and entertaining reading was too strong to be suppressed. Other similar tales were written by orthodox hands, and Gnostic fictions were expurgated, often very imperfectly, for Catholic readers.

Another object aimed at was that of supplying information about the personages of the New Testament, especially about those who are least known. To this cycle of romances we owe attempts at a personal description of St. Peter and of St. Paul, the story of St. Peter's dispute with Simon Magus, the *Quo Vadis* legend, and the statement that the Apostle was crucified head downwards; the story of St. John and the cup of poison; the name of the woman with the flux of blood, of the two thieves who were crucified with our Lord, and of the centurion who mounted guard by the Cross; the names of Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin, and the story of the marriage of Joseph as depicted in the well-known painting by Raffael. Many of these legends became part of the accepted history of the Church.

Another field for a not too reverent imagination lay open in the early life of our Lord. Here the Gnostics were undoubtedly the first pioneers. Irenaeus tells us that the Marcosians forged a great number of apocryphal and bastard scriptures, in one of which appeared the story of Christ at school; the master attempted to teach our Lord the difference between *alpha* and *beta*, and was struck dead for his impertinence.[1] The story appears in the Gospels of the Infancy. In addition, there was about the same time a Gnostic book known as the *Generation of Mary*. In these heretical fictions we must find the seed or first shape of the Gospels of the Childhood.

[1] *Haer.* i. 21.

The documents are marked by two peculiar features, which are very closely interconnected. The first is to be found in certain miracles attributed to the boy Jesus, sometimes of a magical type—as when He moulds clay into birds, which at His command take life and fly; sometimes horrible and even demoniac—as when He slays with a word the schoolmaster above mentioned, or a little playmate who had interfered with His sport. It is difficult, we may say it is impossible, to believe that such miracles could have been invented by a Catholic mind. But to a Gnostic such acts were easily explained by the Gnostic theory of the three kinds of men. The lowest kind, the hylic, were children of the devil, who could do nothing but evil, and were in no event capable of salvation. Hence they might be destroyed with as little compunction as a poisonous snake.

The other is a natural corollary from this. It was highly perilous to approach this formidable Child without a proper introduction. Some one must stand between Him and mankind, and who could do this but His own Mother? Hence those who would come to Jesus must first secure the intercession of the Virgin. Hence Mary is exalted in the Gospels of the Infancy to a superhuman height. It cannot be doubted that the writer of the *Protevangelium* believed in her immaculate conception. In the *Pistis Sophia* Mary appears in close connexion with Salome,[1] who in the Gospels of the Infancy is represented as her inseparable attendant, and Jesus calls her the pleroma of all pleromas, the perfection of all perfections.[2] In the system of Valentinus Mary seems to be regarded as the earthly counterpart of the heavenly Sophia, the only Aeon who conceived without a husband,[3] and thus became the mother of the visible Creation, as Mary of the evangelical re-creation. No such language was used in the Church till centuries after this time.

If we ask how these unwholesome fictions were preserved, and even obtained currency in the Church, the answer is given in the commendatory epistles attributed to St. Jerome and prefixed to the Latin translation of the pseudo-Matthew. The writer regards this apocryphal Gospel as having been

[1] 111 sqq., Meade's Eng. trans. [2] p. 28. [3] Iren. i. 7. 2.

composed or published by Leucius Charinus, a Gnostic; at the same time he offers it to the Christian world as an account of those great miracles which, as no faithful man will deny, must have preceded and followed the nativity of Mary. Orthodox people wanted to know a great deal more than the Church could tell them, and studied these heretical romances in the childlike belief that their facts were true, though the Gnostic framework was obviously false. We shall find Constantine building a church to St. Anne.

It happened also that two of the Gnostic peculiarities, asceticism—aversion to flesh meat, wine, and marriage—and the worship of the Virgin, struck root in the Church itself.

Thus it came to pass that, except for a startling passage here and there, the Gnostic apocrypha ceased to present any occasion of stumbling, and it was found possible, by a very careless and imperfect revision, to adapt them for popular reading, at a time when the dark ages were beginning and taste was universally depraved.

CHAPTER XIII

ANTONINUS PIUS

THREE or four years before his own death Hadrian adopted as his son and heir Lucius Ceionius Commodus, who was also known as Lucius Aurelius Annius Verus. But Verus, who was already far advanced in consumption, died on January 1, 138. Hadrian's own health was already failing, and he made haste to provide for the succession to the throne. In February he adopted Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus. To this long list of names, each marking a stage in the progress by which the originally obscure Aurelian house had risen to distinction, yet another, that of Verus, should probably be added.[1] At the same time a formal compact was made that Antoninus in his turn should adopt both Marcus Annius Verus, the nephew of his wife, Galeria Faustina, and Lucius Verus, the son and namesake of that Verus who had been Hadrian's first choice.

It was probably a family arrangement. Hadrian cannot have been guided by a single eye to the welfare of the Republic in his choice of the elder Verus, a dying man, elegant and accomplished, but vicious and untried, if not incompetent. His object was to secure the throne for some member of the family of Annius Verus, which was of Spanish origin like his own, and to which he was probably related, though we do not know how. Pius was adopted not for his own merit, but because he had married Faustina, a daughter of this house,[2] and, being at the time childless, his two sons having died beforehand, could be trusted to guard the succession for Marcus, and in case of his death for Lucius. The Aurelii, the ancestors of Pius, came from Nîmes, in Southern Gaul. The name of Antoninus was brought into the Aurelian family by Fadilla, the mother of Pius, who was daughter of

[1] Schiller, *Gesch. d. römischen Kaiserzeit*, p. 626 n. [2] *Vita M. Ant.* 5.

Arrius Antoninus. But the alliances and ramifications of all these stems are very imperfectly known.

At the time of his adoption Titus Antoninus was in his fifty-second year. At his accession he received from the Senate the honorary surname of Pius, a word which in its large Roman sense may be rendered by the English 'dutiful, conscientious, good'. The title was well deserved. He had been good to his aged father-in-law, Annius Verus, who used to enter the senate-house leaning upon his arm; he had been good to Hadrian, whom he prevented from committing suicide, and whose memory he zealously honoured. These incidents struck the eyes of men, but in all the relations of life he had displayed the same amiable integrity.

He had been consul before his adoption—we do not know in what year—and after his consulship had been one of the four *iuridici* to whom Hadrian committed the administration of Italy. After this he had acted as proconsul of Asia, and was thought to be the best governor that had ever ruled the province. When he returned to Italy, on the expiration of his year of office, he had been one of the most trusted of Hadrian's counsellors, and his voice had always been in favour of prudence and leniency.

After his accession he showed himself in some ways the very opposite of his predecessor. He was no traveller and no soldier. He had none of the curiosity, the activity, or the organizing ability of Hadrian. Hadrian's talents had drawn him in the direction of autocracy; Pius never moved without advice. His conduct was guided by his council,[1] which included a number of famous lawyers,[2] and he treated the Senate with exaggerated consideration. It is recorded of him that he never took the life of a senator; one senator, who had confessed to parricide, he marooned upon a desert island, but refused to execute. He abolished the Italian *iuridici* because the Senate regarded this reform of Hadrian's as an invasion of their privileges. Some provincial governors were accused of extortion during his reign and condemned, but treated with unusual lenity.

The provinces are said to have flourished in his reign, and

[1] *Vita*, 6. [2] *Vita*, 12.

the whole world profited by the economy of Caesar. He lived on the produce of his own estate, and abhorred all unclean gains. He would accept no legacies from those who had sons of their own, setting his face against a mode of fiscal extortion which was as old as the Empire. Wealthy men were expected to bequeath a large share of their property to Caesar. Some did this willingly as a natural expression of gratitude, and this was supposed to be always the motive. But in most cases there were other reasons. Men hoped that the Emperor would take up their feuds and hatreds, or that he would be good to their families, or at any rate that he would refrain from plundering their sons and daughters. A rich man's will would scarcely have been allowed to take effect unless the sovereign had received his portion. Pius dealt strictly with his fiscal officials, took care that his freedmen did not traffic in his favours, and did not look to confiscations as a source of revenue. He was a generous but not extravagant builder, gave bountiful help to cities which had suffered from unusual calamities, distributed the usual largess to the army and the Roman populace, established a new institution for the support of the daughters of indigent parents (the *puellae Faustinianae*), and made liberal presents to deserving individuals, yet he left behind him a treasure of about 2,700 million sesterces.[1]

In his relations with foreign nations he followed the example of Hadrian. During his reign peace was never seriously disturbed. There was a rebellion of the Jews, whose spirit was not wholly tamed by their dreadful sufferings in the previous reign. We know no details, but it was probably in consequence of this uprising that the Jews were forbidden, on penalty of death, to circumcise any but their own sons; in other words, proselytism was made a capital offence.[2] Berber tribes raided Africa, and there was some inconsiderable trouble on the Danube and on the Armenian borders. In Britain Lollius Urbicus drove back the Brigantes, and built a wall of earth from the Forth to the Clyde. Here only was there any attempt to advance the Roman frontier beyond the line fixed by Hadrian. In the East

[1] Schiller, p. 629.

[2] Dig. 48. 8. 11.

peace is said to have been preserved by mere respect for the Emperor's justice and wisdom. Pius was a great lover of peace, and used to repeat a saying of Scipio's, 'that he would rather save the life of one citizen than kill a thousand enemies.' But it must be noticed that the Eastern army, which Hadrian had left in a high state of efficiency, fell during the reign of Pius into utter disorganization.

It is probable that this decay in discipline was occasioned by a change in military administration which took place at this time. Italians had disappeared from the legions even in the reign of Trajan, but as yet no provincials were admitted who were not possessed of the franchise. Under Pius all restrictions vanished, the legions were recruited by conscription in the districts where they were quartered, and men of all classes were swept into the ranks.[1] This change was fraught with momentous consequences. It transferred from Italians to provincials, from conquerors to conquered, the burden and the privilege of fighting for the Empire, and thus gave the subject races that power of appointing the Emperor which in the next century they so freely asserted. It reduced the military quality, and still more the mobility, of the army; it was no longer easy or safe to dispatch a legion from its birthplace in the East to service in the north of Britain or on the Danube. But, again, this army of provincial conscripts represented the people from which it was levied. If there were Christians in the province—and they were numerous in the East—there would be Christians in the same proportion in the legions of the province, and these men would have increased facilities for disseminating their faith in the close intercourse of the camp or the garrison. Some seventy years later Tertullian asserts that the army was full of Christians, and it is probable that this strong phrase is only an exaggeration of the truth. By the army the religions of Isis and Mithra had been carried all along the frontier, and the same thing must have happened with the religion of Christ.

But what the ancient historians delighted to portray was not the public but the private life of the Emperor. We see

[1] Seeck, *Gesch. d. Untergangs d. antiken Welt*, i. 249-50.

him most distinctly not at Rome but in his country houses at Lorium, or Lanuvium, or Tusculum, or at Alsium by the seaside, surrounded by his family and his friends, waited upon by his own slaves, wearing 'a toga made at one of his own villas on the coast'.[1] He was fond of reading and good conversation, though not a student; offered his daily sacrifice with punctual devotion,[2] took pains with the education of his children, and bore with a good-natured laugh the impertinence of the vain pedants who instructed them.[3] He delighted in country pursuits, in fishing and hunting, and above all in the simple merriment of the vintage, when Marcus would superintend the measuring of the grapes, and the whole family would sup in the barn where the wine-press stood, listening with amusement to the rough banter of the harvesters.[4]

'Simply simple,' Count de Champagny calls him, not affectedly simple as Julian was; hating pomp and never going out of his way to court popularity, yet recognizing the proper value of both; extremely temperate, yet enjoying frankly the good things of life; familiar and gracious, yet dignified. Capitolinus, in his gossiping way, tells us that in his old age he wore stays to keep his slender, stooping figure upright.[5]

When he felt his end approaching, he ordered the statuette of Fortune which always stood in the bedchamber of the Emperor to be transferred to that of Marcus, gave the tribune on service the watchword 'Equanimity', turned round as if to sleep, and so expired.

He was a country gentleman of the best type, refined, religious, and conservative; a good man of business, full of sound sense, always moderate, kindly, and natural. As a ruler it is not so easy to appraise him. He took things as he found them, and people loved him for his fatherly wisdom and compared him to Numa Pompilius. He found the Empire at the height of its strength, and reaped what Trajan and Hadrian had sown. He was confronted by no serious peril. Immediately after his death the troubles which slowly

[1] M. Aurel. *Medit.* i. 16. [2] Fronto, p. 69; cp. *Vita*, 11.
[3] *Vita*, 10. [4] Fronto, p. 69 sq. [5] *Vita*, 13.

destroyed the Empire began to manifest themselves. Pius was stronger than Marcus, but he had neither the political sagacity nor the resolution which are so necessary in critical times.

The Christians built great hopes upon the intelligent mildness of the Emperor. Quadratus had addressed his Apology to Hadrian; under Pius, Aristides and Justin made strong appeals for mercy upon the persecuted Church. They ventured to denounce the faults of paganism in terms which could hardly be acceptable to so devout an upholder of the established religion. They dwelt upon the purity of Christian ethics, a most important point, for the old calumnies were as yet by no means dead, and they endeavoured to show in general terms the reasonableness of Christian doctrine. To some extent Pius responded to the appeal. There had been outbreaks of popular wrath at Athens, Larissa, Thessalonica, and other places in Greece, and the Emperor dispatched several rescripts which were regarded as not unfavourable, at any rate by comparison with the later rescripts of Marcus. What was their exact tenor we do not know; the rescript to the Commune of Asia, appended to the second Apology of Justin, is generally condemned as a forgery. Sulpicius Severus[1] asserts that the Church enjoyed peace during the reign of Pius, but this is not true. At Athens the bishop Publius had been put to death, and the measures taken had been so severe that the church was nearly emptied[2]; and we know, in addition, of three well attested acts of persecution. At Rome Telesphorus the bishop, Ptolemy, and Lucius were put to death, and Polycarp, with a number of others, perished in Asia. Further, in the Letter of the Church of Smyrna allusion is made to other recent martyrdoms, and the language of Justin[3] shows that much Christian blood was shed at this time.

Of Telesphorus we know nothing beyond the bare fact that he was executed; he was the first Bishop of Rome who suffered for the faith.[4]

[1] *Chron.* ii. 32. [2] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 23; Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 492.
[3] *Trypho*, 110, and at the beginning of the Second Apology.
[4] Lightfoot places the death of Telesphorus (138) in the last year of

The case of Ptolemy presents several features of interest.[1] There was in Rome a lady, apparently of some wealth and social standing. She was married to a debauchee, and at first was as bad as he was. But she was converted and reformed, while he remained a pagan and went on in his evil ways. At last she made up her mind to divorce him. The man was furious, and denounced her as a Christian. Upon this she appealed to the Emperor, begging that, before she was tried upon the capital charge, she might have permission to 'arrange her affairs'. This could not be done without recovering her dowry from her former husband. The petition was immediately granted; but the wretched man had spent the money and could not repay it. Being thus balked in his revenge, he turned his malice against one Ptolemy, probably a priest, who had been the instrument of his wife's conversion. Ptolemy was thrown into prison, and there entrapped by the jailer into a confession that he was a Christian. Upon this he was brought before Lollius Urbicus, the conqueror of the Brigantes, who was then (155–60) prefect of the city. Urbicus asked him if it was true that he was a Christian, and receiving an affirmative answer, ordered him to be led away and executed at once. On hearing this sentence one Lucius started up in court and demanded why a man who was neither thief, murderer, nor adulterer should be thus treated, adding, 'What you are doing, Urbicus, ill befits the Emperor Pius, or the philosophic son of Caesar, or the holy Senate.' Urbicus fixed his eye upon the bold man, and said, 'I think you must be a Christian, too.' Lucius replied, 'Certainly,' and was at once sent to share the doom of Ptolemy. With them died another unnamed Christian, who had ventured into court to hear the proceedings and betrayed his sympathy with the accused.

We see in this remarkable tale how the dowry might be used to screen a wife against denunciation by a heathen husband.[2] No doubt the Emperor foresaw the result, and

Hadrian—*Ignatius*, i. 486, 492 sq.; Eusebius, *H. E.* iv. 10, in the first of Antoninus Pius.

[1] Just. *Apol.* ii. 2.

[2] On the other hand, Tertullian says (*ad Uxorem*, ii. 5) that a heathen husband would sometimes rob his Christian wife of her dowry by the threat of denouncing her if she would not give it up.

intended it. Even against Ptolemy the *delator* did not dare to appear in person, and apparently nothing could have been done to Ptolemy if he had not himself confessed his faith to a prison official. The rule of Trajan and of Hadrian, requiring a responsible informer, was therefore by no means ineffectual. In court Urbicus required no other evidence than the prisoner's avowal, and punished him for the 'mere name'. This was in accordance with the rescript of Trajan. But Lucius appealed in fact to the rescript of Hadrian, asserting that no one ought to be put to death unless he had offended against the ordinary criminal law, and that the sentence of Urbicus was a disgrace to the Emperor, to Marcus, and to the Senate. He only brought destruction upon his own head by this spirited protest, and indeed it is highly probable that the milder policy of Hadrian had been abandoned.

The death of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, occurred when Statius Quadratus was proconsul of Asia. Even after the patient researches of Waddington, Lightfoot, and Harnack the exact date is not quite certain. But as these high authorities arrive, though by different arguments, at the same result, we may accept with little hesitation their conclusion that the martyrdom fell in the year 155, not, as used to be supposed, about the year 166. The day was February 23, on a Saturday.

The persecution was occasioned by a popular tumult. Smyrna was noted for its devotion to Caesar-worship,[1] and at the time of the disturbance the Commune of Asia was assembled in the city for business, worship, and amusement, the latter object including *venationes*, or wild beast shows. At such times outcries against the Christians were very likely to make themselves heard. If Lightfoot is right, the proconsul was an intimate friend of his brother rhetorician, Aelius Aristides, who was an outspoken enemy of the Church. But it has recently been maintained that the friend of Aristides was a different man, Urinatius Quadratus, who may have been proconsul of Asia ten years later, in 165.[2]

The account of this persecution, the earliest and one of the

[1] Tac. *Ann.* iv. 56.

[2] See Lightfoot, *Ign.* vol. i, p. 634 sqq.; Harnack, *Chron.* i. 348 sqq.

most beautiful of documents of this nature, is contained in a letter addressed by the Church of Smyrna to the Church of God which sojourneth in Philomelium, and to all the sojournings of the Holy Catholic Church in every place. Similar letters appear to have been regularly sent to the neighbouring communities by any church in which a brother had made a good confession and obtained the crown of martyrdom.

How the trouble began we are not expressly informed. It affected Philadelphia as well as Smyrna, and eleven victims had suffered before the arrest of Polycarp. As to these martyrs, we will only notice that they were tortured with extreme severity in order to enforce recantation. This is an entirely new mode of procedure. It had proved highly effectual at Athens. At Smyrna also it was not without result. One Quintus, a Phrygian—possibly a Montanist—gave himself up and induced others to do the same. But when he saw the instruments of torture and the wild beasts his spirit failed, and he yielded to the persuasions of Quadratus, swore by Caesar, and offered sacrifice. 'Therefore, brethren,' says the Letter, 'we do not praise those who denounce themselves, for the Gospel does not teach us so.' The Church of the East seems at all times to have advised flight in persecution, and indeed the whole Church blamed those who rushed upon their fate. It was held to be unlawful for a Christian to imperil his brethren, or to force the guilt of blood even upon those who were ready to persecute.

Eleven, however, were not to be shaken, and met their doom with indomitable resolution. The sight roused the mob to increased fury, and the arena rang with cries of 'Away with the atheists! Let Polycarp be sought'. Quadratus, in utter disregard of the rescripts so far as we know them, gave way to the popular demand, and sent his captain of the police, one Herodes,[1] to arrest the bishop. Polycarp had wished to remain at his post, but finally yielded to the importunities of his friends and retired to a farm-house not far from the city. Here he lay hid for some few days, and

[1] Herod's aunt, Alce, was possibly a Christian, though her nephew Herodes and her brother Nicetes took an active part against Polycarp. See Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 13, *Polycarp* 8, and Lightfoot's notes.

when this place of concealment became unsafe, even moved to another. But Herod caught one of his slaves, who, under torture, confessed where his master was to be found. Polycarp would fly no further, though he might have done so, but surrendered himself to the police, saying, 'God's will be done.' He was carried straight back into the stadium of the city, which, late as was the hour, quickly filled with a howling mob. Thither came the proconsul in all haste. Polycarp was set before him and asked his name. 'Swear by the genius of Caesar,' said Quadratus. 'Repent; say "Away with the atheists".' Polycarp gazed steadily upon the throng of spectators, lifted his hand to call for silence, and cried aloud, 'Away with the atheists.' 'Swear,' reiterated Quadratus, 'and I will let thee go. Curse Christ.' 'Eighty-six years,' replied Polycarp, 'have I served Him, and He never did me wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?'

The people called for Philip the Asiarch[1], the high priest of the province and president of the Commune, demanding that he should let the lion loose upon Polycarp. Philip replied that this could not be done, as the days fixed by law for the *venationes* were past. Upon this the people shouted that Polycarp should be burned alive. Immediately a number of men hurried to and fro collecting wood from the workshops and baths. The Jews, notes the Letter, were conspicuous for their zeal in gathering fuel, 'as is their custom' —a curious proof of the defectiveness of our lists of martyrs, for when had the Jews enjoyed these opportunities?

Polycarp was bound to the stake, praying and glorifying God with his last breath. As he uttered the final Amen the fire was kindled. The flame, blown by the wind, surged round the martyr 'like a bellying sail' without catching hold of his body. Upon this the mob called for the *confector*, the official whose business it was to give the *coup de grâce* in the arena. The sword was driven into Polycarp's throat, and thus his sufferings were ended.

It is important to notice the utter lawlessness and irregu-

[1] On Philip see Lightfoot, *Ign.*, vol. i, p. 436, and Index; Harnack, *Chron.* i. 348, n.

larity of the whole procedure. Not only was Polycarp 'sought out', not only was there no informer against him, but he was not even regularly sentenced. The populace pronounced the verdict, fixed the mode of punishment, and carried it out with their own hands.

Such, stripped of many beautiful features, is the tale of Polycarp's martyrdom. It is an extraordinary instance of the way in which justice might be administered in the provinces under the reign of Antoninus the Good. Attention has already been directed to the application of torture to those who had already confessed that they were Christians, a practice which appears here for the first time. In the mind of the Roman law torture was not a punishment but a means of extracting evidence. Under the Republic it was used only upon persons of servile condition. Under the Empire even freemen became liable to the infliction; but as yet only those who belonged to the class of *tenuiores*, and only in cases of forgery, magic, or high treason. In the reign of Severus it was laid down that freemen of the lower social class might be tortured in all cases, if their evidence was inconsistent, and therefore manifestly untrue.[1] But even then prisoners who acknowledged their guilt were not put to the question. Polycarp himself was not tortured, but the other martyrs were. By whose orders was this done? If by those of Pius himself, how then are we to explain the statement of Melito that the rescripts of this Emperor were upon the whole moderate and merciful? The answer probably is that Pius allowed the Senate to act within its own provinces pretty much as it pleased, and that Quadratus was a senatorial proconsul. But we may also see here one of many indications of the increase of cruelty in the Antonine age. In the law-books and in the *Augustan History* will be found many instances of a barbarity unknown before.

Polycarp is in many ways a most interesting figure. He speaks of having served Christ for eighty-six years. He must have been born then, at latest, in A.D. 70, about the date of the sack of Jerusalem, a time when the Crucifixion was still well within the range of living memory. He treasured up

[1] *Digest*, 48. 18. 15 in Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, p. 407.

anecdotes of St. John, and told Irenaeus how the Apostle would not enter the public baths when he heard that Cerinthus, 'the enemy of the truth,' was within.[1] At a later date Polycarp himself showed the same inflexible spirit towards Marcion the Gnostic, whom he rebuked as 'the first-born of Satan'. He is called a disciple of the Apostles, and may very well have been so. He was personally known to Ignatius, and to him we owe the collection of the Ignatian Epistles. He visited Rome in the time of Pope Anicetus, who treated him with honour, in spite of his Quartodeciman ism, and invited him to celebrate the Eucharist; and Irenaeus, in his young days, before he left Asia for Gaul, had known him well, had heard him not only preaching in church, but sitting in his accustomed chair and talking familiarly to any who cared to listen about John and others who had seen the Lord, and their words and their miracles and their doctrine. All that the old man said, adds Irenaeus, was in agreement with the Scriptures. He means the Christian Scriptures, as Irenaeus received them himself; he means also that the interpretation put upon those Scriptures by Polycarp agreed with his own.[2]

Polycarp would be about twenty-five years old at the time when Clement of Rome composed his Epistle. Irenaeus, in the Letter to Florinus, calls him 'the apostolic elder'. Elsewhere[3] he says that Polycarp had been 'appointed by the apostles unto Asia as bishop of the Church in Smyrna'. We might infer from this that Polycarp was not only Bishop of Smyrna, but was regarded as primate of all the Asiatic churches.[4] In the Epistle of his own church Polycarp is styled 'Bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna'.[5] So great was the reverence with which he was regarded, that he had never been allowed to take his own boots off.[6] The brethren pressed round him to discharge even the most menial offices to his person. The honour was paid probably

[1] Iren. iii. 3. 4. [2] *Epistle to Florinus*, preserved in Eus. *H. E.* v. 20.
[3] Iren. iii. 3. 4; Eus. *H. E.* iv. 14. 3. [4] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 15. 26.
[5] Ib. iv. 15. 39.
[6] Ib. iv. 15. 30. The same thing is recorded of Bishop Fructuosus, who suffered in Spain in the reign of Gallienus: Prudentius, περὶ στεφ. vi. 73 sqq.

rather to the office than to the person, and it gives us a higher notion of the dignity of a bishop than all the strong language of Ignatius. The bishop received from his willing subjects all those marks of observance which were exacted by a secular grandee. Yet he might still be called simply 'presbyter', though Polycarp was clearly chief of his church, and possibly chief of all the churches in the province. These facts may perhaps serve to confirm the view suggested above in the chapter on Clement of Rome, that at this time the president of the church was called presbyter in respect of his consecration, bishop in respect of his jurisdiction. Polycarp himself, in his Epistle to the Philippians, speaks of their clergy as presbyters and deacons. We might, at a pinch, infer from this that the institution of monarchical episcopacy had not yet extended from Asia to Europe. But the title bishop certainly existed at Philippi in St. Paul's time, and it would be difficult to suppose that the church in that town was not in Polycarp's time organized in the same way as the churches of the East.

Polycarp was already Bishop of Smyrna at the time of the martyrdom of Ignatius. Ignatius addresses and admonishes him in the tone of a superior, exhorting him in particular to seek for the gift of prophecy. 'Pray for more understanding than thou hast'; 'pray that things not seen may be revealed unto thee.'[1] In his Letter to the Church at Philippi, written shortly after Ignatius had been carried through the town on his way to Rome, Polycarp modestly confesses that he had not yet received the gift.[2] Three days before his arrest he was warned in a vision that he should die by fire,[3] and thus his name also was entered upon the roll of the prophets. But he did not feel that he needed this form of inspiration. It seemed to him enough for himself and others to study the Scriptures, and draw from them the needful instruction in life and doctrine.[4] We should not lament this sobriety as a falling away from the enthusiasm of the primitive use. It had been the characteristic attitude of the Church from the very first. It is a most misleading error to regard the abnormal excitement of the old Corinthian

[1] *Polyc.* 1. 2. [2] *Phil.* 12. [3] *Mart.* 5. [4] *Phil.* 3.

brotherhood as proper to all, or even to many of the newly founded communities. Neither in East nor West, nor in the New Testament itself, is any foundation for this opinion to be discovered. From the time when the voice of the Apostles was hushed, the religion of the Church was the religion of the Book.

The Book, as known to Polycarp, contained nearly the whole of the New Testament, but on this point the reader must be directed to the list of biblical quotations given in the editions of his short Epistle. The name, and perhaps the idea of a Canon, did not as yet exist, but already about the middle of the second century, and indeed from the time of St. Clement, the thing is substantially there.

CHAPTER XIV

MARCUS AURELIUS

Marcus succeeded his adoptive father Pius on March 17, 161, and died on March 17, 180, at Sirmium or Vindobona.[1]

His father, Annius Verus, who died in the prime of life, was descended from a Spanish family of moderate estate. They had been raised to the patriciate by Vespasian, and by merit or fortunate alliances had obtained a high position among the Roman nobility. His mother was Domitia Calvilla, also called Lucilla, a devout and accomplished woman, granddaughter of that Catilius Severus who had dared to hope that Hadrian would adopt him as his successor. Marcus in his infancy bore the name of Catilius Severus, and may have been adopted into his mother's family. But, if so, he soon passed back into that of his father, and resumed the name of Annius Verus.

Trajan and Hadrian were Spaniards and kinsmen, and it is probable that by blood or marriage they were connected with the Gallic Aurelii, the Spanish Annii Veri, and the Ceionii Commodi of Etruria. The latter, a family of ancient nobility, among their many names bore those of Aurelius and Annius Verus, and it was possibly by the patronage or alliance of this distinguished house that the Spanish and Gallic families had climbed to an eminent place in high Roman society. In this way we may account for the otherwise inexplicable adoption of Lucius Verus by Hadrian, for his choice of Antoninus Pius as his successor, for his direction that Pius in turn should adopt Marcus and the younger Lucius Verus, and for the name Commodus borne by the son of Marcus. These adoptions were all family arrangements. The natural rule of primogeniture would have been followed if this had not been made impossible by

[1] Schiller, i. 635, 651.

that childlessness which lay like a blight on so many of the noble Roman houses.

Marcus, says his biographer, 'was grave from his first infancy,' a sweetly pensive, transparently candid child.[1] Hadrian, the cynical Ulysses who was anything but grave, loved him, gave him the pet name of Verissimus, kept him much about his own person, and made him chief of the college of Salii at the age of eight. In this capacity the child would dance at the head of his aristocratic colleagues through the streets of Rome in the opening days of the month of March, and preside at the famous Saliarian banquets. The boy-bishop, as we may call him, discharged these priestly duties with exemplary decorum, and knew by heart the ancient, long, and unintelligible formularies which belonged to the ritual of his quaint and time-honoured corporation. Throughout his life Marcus was deeply and punctiliously religious.

Upon the death of Hadrian, Marcus, then a young man of seventeen, was betrothed to Faustina, and took up his abode in the house of the Emperor Pius, under whose roof he lived till the day of his accession. He was treated in all respects as the heir apparent, was consul with Pius in 140 at the age of nineteen, and again in 145 at the age of twenty-four. He was married to Faustina in 146, and was invested with the imperial prerogatives of the tribunician and proconsular powers in the following year, though he was still styled Caesar, and did not receive the title of Augustus till after the death of his adoptive father.

His health was always weak, and so long as his mother lived—she appears to have died shortly before Pius—she watched over him with anxious solicitude, which he repaid with the tenderest affection. This delicacy of constitution was no doubt the reason why he was kept at home. He never served in the army, nor travelled, nor governed a province. He was diligent in attending the Senate, and was admitted to the privy council of the Emperor. Beyond this he had no practical training. His education was entirely academical and bookish; his mind was full at first

[1] *Vita*, 2.

for many years of purely literary ambitions, afterwards of the severe Stoic philosophy. From the first he was deeply religious; as the years increased he turned more and more to the contemplative life, watching over the purity of his soul with the jealous and subtle self-questionings of a monk in the cloister.

Delicate as he was in body and in spirit, the influences by which he was chiefly guided were no doubt those of his mother and of his adoptive father. Of the latter he has drawn a beautiful sketch in his *Meditations*, of the former there is a charming glimpse in his correspondence. They attended carefully to his education, and the list of his preceptors includes the names of nearly all those men who at that time were the lights of the schools. He mentions many of them with gratitude for the moral benefit he had received from them. Some simple virtue, some fresh insight into duty, he attaches to the name of each; of their opinions or theories he says little or nothing. Some few points are of special interest to us. From Diognetus he had learnt to distrust all pretenders to miraculous powers, especially that of exorcising evil spirits. As he more than once in his later life showed a ready belief in heathen thaumaturgists, we may suppose that he is thinking here of Christians and their claim to cast out demons. Certainly Fronto, the best known and the most important of all his teachers, was strongly antichristian.

Fronto has drawn for us his own portrait. He was a courtier, a pedant, and a rhetorician. He was servile with that artful servility which boasts that it is independent. As a scholar he belonged to the decadents, professing to admire Cato and Gracchus above Cicero. Yet it is probable that his acquaintance with these stars of the Republican forum was but slender, for there was but one known copy of the orations of Cato in Rome, and when Marcus had borrowed it from the temple of Apollo, Fronto had to send to the library of Tiberius and inquire whether there happened to be another in that collection. He did not care to buy even the books which he regarded as masterpieces.[1]

[1] Fronto, p. 68.

The most famous rhetoricians of the age were Greek; Fronto was an African from Cirta, and combined the coarse provincial taste of the African with the verbose frivolity of the Greek. By his ready tongue he had raised himself to the consulship and to great wealth: he lived in Rome in the old palace of Maecenas.[1] But he was not without redeeming features. He was conscientious in his duty as tutor, and could give good advice wrapped up in sugary phrases. It was not his fault if Marcus read a book during the races in the Circus or at the Imperial dinner-table, or if he studied and scribbled when he ought to have been in bed. He was honest, as the word is understood in an age when everybody is filling his pockets at the public expense. He was true to his friends, and not rancorous against those who were his enemies, and he found his chief happiness at home with his wife, his little daughter Gratia, and his birds. Marcus clung to Fronto with girlish devotion, and learned from him to detest the tyrannical character, with its malice, cunning, and hypocrisy. He learned from him also that the great Roman nobles were generally deficient in simple human affection.

Marcus remained under the sway of Fronto from 139 to 145. After this time there in a break in the correspondence till 161, when both Marcus and Verus, now Emperors, resumed the study of rhetoric and came again for a short time into touch with their old tutor. About 165 Marcus turned away from rhetoric, and threw himself into philosophy, under the guidance of his brother Severus and Rusticus. The former taught him to admire Brutus, the tyrannicide, and to look back upon the free republic as the ideal constitution; the latter lent him a copy of Epictetus (again we notice the rarity of books), and exhorted him to live the Stoic life. Rusticus was himself sprung from the seed of the Stoic martyrs of the first century, and was the man who as prefect of the city condemned Justin Martyr to death.

Stoicism was a strange creed for a despot. Any one of its preachers would have told Marcus that he deserved to be murdered, and that if he escaped the assassin's knife he was

[1] Fronto, p. 23.

doomed by the necessity of things to be the corrupter-general of mankind. Platonism would have taught him that the Emperor was, or ought to be, the minister of God for good, or the same lesson might have been learned from St. Paul or St. Peter. As a disciple of Epictetus he must have felt himself in a wholly false position, and no man can make a good ruler whose theory is utterly at variance with the times and with his own special duties. Again, the Stoic, to quote a well-known phrase, 'considered virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent.'[1] The first two of these articles may pass with explanation. But 'things external which are things indifferent' include not only one's own misfortunes, but the misfortunes of others. All men, according to the Stoic, must endure what God or nature or the framework of society lays upon them: if they can no longer endure they must kill themselves. This is hardly the view which subjects expect their ruler to take. Gibbon regards the reign of Marcus Aurelius as the golden age of the world, because a philosopher was king. But in sober truth it was a time of unrelieved disasters, and the disasters were, to an extent which it is not easy to measure, caused or intensified by the weakness of the good Emperor himself.

Hardly had Marcus ascended the throne than troubles began. From 161 to 166 there was war with Parthia. Marcus entrusted the chief command to his brother and co-regent, Lucius Verus, a vicious, vain, and incapable man, who spent his life mainly in debauchery, leaving his lieutenants to deal with the enemy. The course of the struggle was chequered and indecisive; the only person who gained much credit was Avidius Cassius, a cruel but capable commander. In 167 began what is usually called the Marcomannian War. A loose confederacy of German and Sarmatian tribes, impelled by we know not what pressure from the North, came pouring across the frontier of the Danube, and extended their ravages as far as Northern Italy, Greece, and even Rhodes. It was a most formidable affair, a precursor of that great tide of barbarian immigration

[1] Gibbon, chap. iii.

which two centuries later submerged the Western Empire. With one brief interval, filled by the ill-starred revolt of Avidius Cassius, it lasted throughout the remainder of the Emperor's reign, and the enemy were still in arms when Marcus died.

Enormous losses were sustained in the course of the war; many serious reverses were experienced by the Romans, many high officers lost their lives, and the number of the captives taken by the barbarians was almost beyond computation. The general sense of depression was deepened by a terrible outbreak of Oriental plague brought to the West by troops returning from the Parthian War. It raged in Rome and elsewhere as fiercely as the mediaeval Black Death, and famine marched in the rear of the pestilence. This accumulation of horrors caused, as was natural, grave spiritual disquiet. A heathen prophet or impostor arose in Rome, and proclaimed in the Campus Martius that the world would shortly be destroyed by fire. The Sibylline Oracles drew the same conclusion from the signs of the times: Nero would shortly return as Antichrist, and the Day of Judgement was at hand.[1] Finally, the Empire emerged from the desperate struggle safe but bankrupt. The immense treasure accumulated by Pius had been spent, the crown jewels had been sold or pawned, the silver coinage had been debased and for some years no gold had been minted, and large districts were left void of inhabitants. Finally, by a disastrous but perhaps necessary policy, hordes of barbarian immigrants were allowed to settle in Mysia, in Pannonia, in the German provinces, and even in Italy in the country round Ravenna.[2] These new inhabitants were treated as serfs, bought and sold with the estate on which they resided, and to this half-servile condition the great bulk of the rural population of the Empire gradually descended.

These calamities were partly a result of the too peaceful disposition of Antoninus Pius. The quality of the Roman troops had deteriorated, the Eastern army had fallen into a state of utter indiscipline, and things were probably not

[1] viii. 65 sqq. [2] Dio Cass. 71. 11.

much better in the other camps. But Marcus had no knowledge of military affairs. The men whom he delighted to have about him, to reward and promote, were not soldiers, but men of letters. He was also a bad judge of character. Stoicism taught him, among other unkindly lessons, to take people as he found them, making the utmost of their good qualities, and turning a blind eye to their faults. Dio Cassius says[1] that he bestowed the purple upon Lucius Verus because he hoped to find in him a strong and capable commander-in-chief, but it was not a wise act. Provincial governors were neither well chosen nor strictly supervised. Pescennius Niger offered Marcus good advice on this matter, but the Emperor neglected it,[2] and Avidius Cassius complained that legates and proconsuls piled up immense fortunes by robbing the provincials, and were not restrained. The Empress Faustina was probably not so shameless as the brutal gossip of the capital represented her, but she was fierce, proud, and unfaithful; in all respects a bad wife for her studious and saintly husband. The domestic life of Marcus must have been a constant purgatory, but he could neither check nor conceal the indiscretions of his wife, and is even said to have promoted her paramours. Yet after her death he paid her extravagant honours, ordering that brides and bridegrooms should before their marriage burn incense upon her altar in the temple of Venus and Rome, as if Faustina were the goddess of chastity and connubial felicity, and in his *Meditations* thanks Heaven that he has been blessed with a wife 'so obedient, so affectionate, and so simple'.[3]

In fine, Marcus was, like many other religious sovereigns, one of the noblest examples and one of the worst of rulers. He could show men exactly what they ought to do, but he could not make them do it. Whatever he could accomplish himself—whatever, as the Stoics used to say, 'was in his own power'—he performed with admirable sincerity and devotion; but he did not possess the royal art of selecting the best instruments and getting out of them their best work. He struggled manfully with his difficulties, and from

[1] 71. 1. [2] *Pes. Nig. Vita*, 7. [3] i. 17.

the time when the Marcomannian War broke out was almost constantly upon the scene of danger, where indeed he died in his harness, and as became an Emperor. Yet even then he was pondering not strategy, nor the nature and institutions of the fierce tribes which he hoped to subdue, but the movements of his own pure soul and the attacks of his own spiritual enemies. Amid the clang of arms he composed his *Meditations*.

In spite of his philosophic creed he was superstitious. Half agnostic, half pantheist as he was by profession, he yet believed in his heathen gods; he even believed that he could add to their number, and built temples to Faustina. By the gods in dreams, not by human physicians, he had been taught how to cure his tendency to consumption. He was so devoted to his religious duties that he offered his sacrifice even on days that the heathen priests thought unlawful. In the great terror of the Marcomannian War he summoned priests from every quarter of the Empire, and celebrated all sorts of foreign rites.[1] At the suggestion of the noted quack, Alexander of Abonoteichos, he threw two lions and a quantity of spices into the Danube. When the Roman army was surrounded in a defile of the mountains, and likely to perish by thirst, Marcus ordered Arnuphis, an Egyptian magician who followed in his train, to pray to Hermes.[2] Rain immediately fell, which the troops caught in their shields, drank, and were refreshed. The storm beat in the faces of the barbarians, the lightning struck them down, and the Roman army was not only saved but gained a great victory. The incident actually occurred, and is commemorated on the Antonine column. Out of it arose almost immediately the Christian legend of the *Legio Fulminatrix*. The Church attributed the miracle not to the Emperor nor to Arnuphis, but to the prayers of the Twelfth Legion of Melitene, which bore the title not of Fulminatrix but of Fulminata, and was represented as composed entirely of Christians. This is no doubt a fable; at the same time, under the new law of conscription, there would be, as has been pointed out above in the account of Pius, a good many Christians in the ranks.

[1] *Vita*, 13. [2] Dio Cass. 71. 8, 9; Eus. *H. E.* v. 5; Tert. *Apol.* v.

Marcus was a wise, amiable, and religious man. Yet he was the worst persecutor that had as yet arisen. Many causes contributed to this unfortunate result: his education and the early influence of such men as Diognetus and Fronto; his pride as a Roman, a name which he sedulously cherished, though he was in fact less Roman than any of his predecessors; his deep religiousness and his Stoicism. The worst persecutors have been saints and philosophers. He could see in the Christian martyrs nothing but 'mere party spirit', partly because he did not think any creed was worth dying for. But the persecutions seem to have occurred in the dark days of the Marcomannian War, when, as has been said, there was great political disquiet—when the heathen naturally ascribed the calamities of the State to the anger of the gods, and the anger of the gods to the impiety of the Christians. Part of the ill-treatment of the Church was no doubt due to popular hatred; but Marcus himself fanned the flame.

Melito of Sardis complains of new and severe rescripts, or edicts, which were directed to his own country, Asia. He does not complain of bloodshed, only that these new laws were of such a character that a host of informers had been let loose, and that the Christians were obliged to buy a precarious security by payment of blackmail on a very large scale. Melito goes on to appeal to the Emperor on the ground that Christianity was coeval with the glories of the Empire, and had been a special blessing to the reign of Marcus himself. In Melito's belief only wicked Emperors, Nero and Domitian, had afflicted the Church; good Emperors, such as Hadrian and Pius, had exerted themselves to restrain the fury of the oppressor. A little later blood was shed in Asia by Marcus. But Melito seems to write in entire ignorance of the Bithynian martyrs, or of Ignatius, or of Polycarp. It was a pathetic fallacy found also in other apologists, that no good sovereign could deal harshly with the servants of Christ.

Rusticus also, the prefect of the city, refers in the trial of Justin Martyr to an edict of the Emperor. It is possible that we have the very text of this order. Modestinus[1]

[1] In the *Digest*, 48. 19. 30.

records a law of Marcus directing that any one who does anything to terrify the foolish minds of men by religious superstition should be banished to an island, that is to say, should be sent to a convict settlement. Paullus also [1] lays down the rule, though he does not ascribe it to Marcus, that 'those who introduce new, unusual, and unreasonable religions, by which the minds of men are unsettled, if *honestiores* are deported, if *humiliores* are put to death.' Christianity is not expressly mentioned; the enactment is directed against any religion that may cause a popular disturbance. Paullus tells us that people of low condition were liable to capital punishment. Modestinus, a somewhat later jurist, speaks only of exile. Either form of the decree would be a formidable weapon against the Church. The edict mentioned by Rusticus not merely ordered the death penalty, but a peculiar form of that infliction—the convict was to be executed *more maiorum*, that is to say, first scourged with rods and then beheaded with an axe.

During the reign of Marcus, Justin and his companions perished at Rome about 163, and a considerable number of Romans were found imprisoned at his death in the mines of Sardinia, to be released by his unworthy successor Commodus. About the same time Thraseas, Bishop of Eumenea, and Sagaris, Bishop of Laodicea in Asia, were put to death. Whether that Arrius Antoninus who is mentioned by Tertullian as having put Christians to death while proconsul of Asia was the Arrius who was governor of the province under Marcus is uncertain, but not improbable.[2] In 177 there was a serious persecution at Lyons, in Gaul. We might add to the list the martyrs of Madaura and of Scili in Africa, but they suffered a few months after the death of Marcus in 180, and it will be better to speak of them under the reign of Commodus. Nevertheless, their deaths prove that religious hatred had already been excited in Africa by the policy of Marcus, and he may be regarded as really responsible for them.[3] But there must have been numerous victims whose

[1] 5. 21. 2. [2] Tert. *ad Scap.* 5.

[3] The Acts of Felicitas and her seven sons, and of Cecilia and her companions, are late, and in details so untrustworthy that they can hardly find a place in serious history: cp. Lightfoot, *Ign.* vol. i, pp. 495–506.

names are unknown to us. The Apologists, Justin, Minucius Felix, Athenagoras and Theophilus, and the heathen writers Celsus and Lucian, all testify to the severity with which Christians were handled under both the Antonines. Hitherto persecution had been confined to Rome and Asia. Under Pius it extended to Greece, under Marcus to Gaul and Africa. This order probably represents the different rate of speed at which Christianity advanced in East and West. But we still hear nothing of trouble in Spain. It is not improbable that the Gospel had been preached in that country by St. Paul.[1] How far it had spread by the middle of the second century we do not know. The senatorial officials who governed there may have been less severe than the Imperial legates. Again, later notices seem to show that the Spanish Christians were not aggressive—they seem, indeed, to have accommodated themselves rather too easily to the ways of the heathen world.[2] We hear of no Spanish martyrs till the time of Decius.

Justin was tried and condemned by Junius Rusticus, who was prefect of the city from 163 to 167. He had resided in Rome for some time at an earlier date in the reign of Pius, about 152, when he wrote his Apology or Apologies.[3] He had made his way into the Church through the schools, and after his conversion still wore the *pallium*, or gown, of a philosopher. Like Socrates, he made it his special task to haunt the porticoes and public places in the city, where he would converse or dispute with all comers. Thus he had on several occasions come into conflict with one Crescens, a Cynic teacher or street preacher, who was in the habit of inveighing against the Christians as atheists and impious.[4] It was not difficult for Justin to prove to the bystanders that Crescens did not know what he was talking about; but his dialectic victory brought upon him the hatred of his adversary. Justin expected the man to denounce him, but his fear apparently was not realized. If so, it was to the credit of Crescens that he digested his mortification and abstained from so easy and crushing a revenge. Some thirteen years

[1] Harnack, *Mission*, p. 410, n. 4.
[2] Ib. p. 528 sqq.
[3] Harnack, *Chron.* i. 274 sqq.
[4] *Apol.* ii. 3.

later he was again in Rome, lodging in an upper room in the house of one Martinus, which was near, or formed part of, a bath called Timothinum, or Novatianum, on the Viminal Hill, in the Vicus Patricius, one of the finest streets in Rome,[1] where he had gathered round him a company of disciples. We do not know the circumstances of his arrest; the Acts only inform us that he was brought before Rusticus, who had lent Marcus his copy of Epictetus and was now prefect of the city, with six of his scholars. They were Chariton, Charito—a woman—Euelpistus, a slave of Caesar, who was born of Christian parents in Cappadocia, Paeon, who also was Christian from birth, Hierax, who came from Iconium, in Phrygia, and Liberianus.

Justin, with whose reputation for learning Rusticus was evidently acquainted, was allowed to make a brief speech for the defence. 'First of all,' said the prefect, 'obey the gods and do what the Emperors command.' Justin replied, 'We cannot be accused or blamed for obeying the precepts of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' 'What doctrines do you profess?' 'I have endeavoured to learn all doctrines, but have settled in those of the Christians, although they are misliked by the advocates of error.' 'Are those the doctrines which you hold, wretched man?' 'Yes, for I follow them with right dogma' (here it will be observed that, speaking to a Stoic magistrate, Justin employs a Stoic phrase). Rusticus, the prefect, said, 'What dogma is that?' Justin answered, 'That by which we worship the God of the Christians, whom we believe to be one from the beginning, Maker and Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,[2] whom also the prophets announced as coming to the race of man, to preach salvation and be the teacher of noble disciples. And I, being but man, think that I speak but meanly of His infinite deity, recognizing a certain prophetic power, for proclamation was made beforehand of Him who, as I said just now, is Son of God. For I know that the

[1] *Mart. Justin.* in *Opp.* ed. Otto, ii, pp. 266 sqq. It is said to have been built by two brothers, Timotheus and Novatus, and to have been afterwards turned into a church (Greg. i, p. 35; Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, ii. 223).

[2] The Greek here has *παῖδα*, below *υἱόν*: the Latin has *filium* in both places.

prophets prophesied of old of His coming, which has happened among men.'

'Where do you meet?' was the next question. 'Where each will or can,' said Justin. Pressed for a definite answer, Justin replied, 'In an upper room of the house of Martin . . . And all this time (for this is my second residence in Rome) I know no other meeting-place but that in his house.' 'To be brief, then,' said Rusticus, 'you are a Christian?' 'Yes,' said Justin, 'I am a Christian.'

The others were merely asked their names and countries. Once more Rusticus turned to Justin with a scornful question about the Resurrection. 'Harkee, you who are called learned and think that you know the truth; if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe that you will go up to heaven?' Then he added, 'Let us get to business. Come, all of you, and sacrifice to the gods.' All refused, and were sent to immediate execution. The proceedings can scarcely have lasted more than half an hour; but there was no torture, and the faithful were allowed to carry off their bodies and bury them without molestation. Justice in the court of that prefect of the city was swift and hard, but not savage.

Justin's confession represents very accurately his theology, as expressed in his writings, and it is that of the creeds, down to and including that of Nicaea. The One God is the Father, who is Maker of all things visible and invisible. This is the 'right dogma' in opposition to Gnosticism. The Son, who is distinct from and subordinate to the Father, and may even be called the 'Second God', is yet infinite in His deity. The Holy Spirit is left in the vague, as in the Creed of Nicaea, and is called 'a prophetic Power'.

But what does Justin mean when he says that he knows no meeting-place for Roman Christians except that in the house of Martin? There were certainly other churches in Rome—for instance, that in which Polycarp had been allowed to celebrate the Eucharist by Pope Anicetus—and Justin indeed acknowledges this when he says that Christians assembled 'where each man will or can'. Moreover, he has given in his Apology a full outline of a liturgy which is probably that of the Church of Rome. Justin was not

a priest, and the upper room in the house of Martin seems to have been rather a lecture-hall than a church. Are we to suppose that he was acting as a sort of lay missionary, and kept aloof from the bishop and clergy? And if he did adopt a position of independence, what was his motive? Was it that in the perilous days of the Antonines it was not thought desirable that one congregation should know more than was necessary about another? Or was it that Justin was regarded with some suspicion as a free lance?

Our histories of dogma suffer greatly from the difficulty of ascertaining which of the early writings are in the regular line of development and which are not. Justin was unknown to the erudite Clement of Alexandria. His last books against the Gnostics were possibly utilized by Irenaeus and others; otherwise Eusebius is the first writer whom we know to have read his works.

The persecution of Lyons, which occurred in the year 177, was directly due to the hostility of the people themselves.

How long a Church had existed in Lyons we do not know. We cannot tell even at what date Christianity obtained a footing in the old province; but the new faith probably travelled up the Rhone valley, and if so it must have secured a lodgment in Marseilles, Nîmes, Arles, and Vienne before it reached the capital of Celtic Gaul. If the Gospel was not carried into Gaul from the East, at any rate the Church of Lyons was in close contact with the churches of Asia. Irenaeus himself came from Smyrna, and many of his friends came from the same region. The doctrines of the Phrygian Montanists were already known at Lyons. Down to the end of the Republic Marseilles had been strongly Hellenic. Since the establishment of the Empire the Romanizing of the old province had proceeded with great rapidity. But communication with the East was as active as ever; indeed, it never ceased, and was well maintained even in the time of Sidonius Apollinaris.

Lyons, at the confluence of the Rhone and Saone, just outside the old province, had been established in B.C. 43, during the civil wars. It was from the first an outpost of Roman civilization in Celtic Gaul. Its inhabitants possessed

the full Roman franchise; it was the residence of the imperial legate who governed Gallia Lugdunensis; it had a small permanent garrison; it was the centre of the network of the Gallic roads, and contained a mint. It was also the meeting-place of the Diet of the three Gauls, which assembled there every year for the transaction of important provincial affairs and for the celebration of an important religious national festival. Lyons was the chief seat of Caesar-worship in Gaul. There Drusus, in B.C. 12, had consecrated an altar to Rome and the Genius of Augustus, and the festival, held on the first day of August, included not only the usual games, but also a rhetorical competition established by the Emperor Caligula.[1] In early autumn, therefore, the city would be filled with a great concourse of people, traders, especially wine merchants, provincial notabilities, persons who had business with the Diet, representatives of Gallic learning, and a great multitude of holiday-makers. It was at this juncture that persecution broke out, as it had done twenty years before, at Smyrna, under very similar circumstances.

The first sign of coming trouble was a general outburst of popular hatred. Christians were attacked in the streets with outcries, blows, and stones, so that they durst not show themselves in the baths or the Forum, and even their houses were attacked and plundered. Upon this the magistrates of the city took action. By their order, or on their suggestion, the tribune commanding the garrison arrested a number of Christians, brought them into the Forum where a great throng of people had assembled, and placed them before the local authorities for a preliminary investigation. The magistrates did all that was in their power, and sent the accused to the common jail to await the arrival of the legate, who happened to be absent from the town.[2]

Immediately upon his return the legate held his first inquiry; there would appear to have been several, but the narrative is not quite clear upon this point. The prisoners

[1] Juv. i. 44; Suet. *Calig.* 20.

[2] The history of the martyrdom is given in the contemporary letter of the churches of Lyon and Vienne to the churches in Asia and Phrygia: preserved in Eus. *H. E.* v. 1.

already in confinement were put upon their trial; they were probably poor and ignorant people of unready tongue, and Vettius Epagathus, a young man of noble birth and high repute in the Church, demanded permission to act as their advocate.[1] He was instantly arrested and placed at the bar with the others. Of the prisoners, about ten denied the faith, to the great grief and alarm of the brethren, many of whom had ventured into court. The legate proceeded no further at the time, but issued orders that Christians should be 'sought out', in direct violation of Trajan's edict. Accordingly numerous arrests were made, including several members of the Church of Vienne, a fact which there is difficulty in explaining, as Vienne was not within the legate's jurisdiction; but the persons in question were probably in Lyons at the time, drawn thither either by business or by sympathy. Among the new prisoners were several heathen slaves of Christian masters, who, under threats of torture, confessed that their masters were guilty of all the horrible crimes imputed to them by vulgar superstition, in particular of cannibalism and incest. Here we have another gross violation of Trajan's edict, and indeed of common law, and another proof of the ignorance and barbarism of the times of the enlightened Marcus.[2] These abominable lies naturally excited great fury and indignation, and the legate proceeded to torture six of his prisoners in order to ascertain the truth. Sanctus, the deacon (the only deacon, or the well-known deacon) of the Viennese Church, would answer no question at all, simply gasping out the words, 'I am a Christian.'

[1] On Vettius (or Vectius) Epagathus see Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* i. 29; *Vitae Patrum*, 6. The mother of St. Gallus, Bishop of Clermont in the early part of the sixth century, traced her descent to him.

[2] Under the earlier Emperors slaves were sometimes compelled to bear witness against their masters in cases of *maiestas*, but to save the common law they were first taken out of their masters' households and made slaves of the State. In the reign of Commodus delation of masters by slaves was common and was regarded by the Senate as a great violation of the law (*Vita Commodi*, 19). The same irregularity may have happened in the reign of Marcus. Christianity might be regarded as *maiestas*, but at Lyons slaves were examined, not to prove that their masters were Christians—for they had confessed or denied this, and therefore were either guilty or not guilty—but to establish other charges, and this appears to have been quite illegal. See Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, pp. 350, 414.

Blandina, a delicate slave-girl, whose mistress also was in prison, replied only, 'I am a Christian, and we do nothing bad.' Biblias, another girl, had denied the faith, but when the legate required that she should also blaspheme Christ, she recovered her courage and refused; when put to the rack and questioned, she answered, 'How can we eat little children, when we are not allowed to taste the blood even of brutes?'

Among the later batch of prisoners was the Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus,[1] a venerable man of ninety years or more. When the legate asked him, 'Who was the God of the Christians?' he replied, 'If thou art worthy thou shalt know.' He was thrust back into jail, but had been so cruelly ill-treated by the people in court, in presence of the governor, that he died two days afterwards.

Many other of the captives died in that sunless, stinking dungeon. With the confessors were locked up those who at the first hearing had denied the faith, the legate, with malignant ingenuity, having acquitted them on the charge of Christianity and condemned them as murderers and filthy rogues.

The martyrs finally were executed in two batches. On the first day, immediately after the legate had delivered sentence, Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were sent into the arena. Maturus and Sanctus were tortured to death with the most ghastly barbarity. Their sufferings, says the narrator, saved the town the expense of a gladiatorial show. Blandina was bound to a pole, but the wild beasts would not touch her, and she was remanded. At the last moment it was discovered that Attalus was a Roman citizen, and he also was put back till the Emperor's will could be ascertained. The excellent Marcus wrote back that all should be tortured to death if they would not recant. Evidently the privileges of the Roman citizen were already obsolescent; at any rate, his right of appeal was not on this occasion recognized.

The final scene of the tragedy occurred as soon as the Emperor's rescript arrived. This would be about three

[1] Gregory of Tours, *In Gloria Martyrum*, c. 49, gives his name as Photinus (Φωτεινός): also *Hist. Franc.* i. 29.

weeks later, for the carrier would probably find Marcus up by the Danube. By this time the Gallican Diet had assembled, and the First of August was past. The legate, more merciful than his master, held a final inquiry, ascertained which of his captives were Roman citizens—there were several, indeed every citizen of Lyons was also a citizen of Rome—and beheaded them without torture; Attalus, however, was sent into the arena with the others, as a special favour to the mob. Some of the recreants, when it came to the last, retracted their denial, and shared the fate of their brethren. With them perished another bold man, Alexander, a Phrygian, a prophet and probably a Montanist, who, though well known by face because he had practised in Lyons for many years as a physician, ventured to repeat the conduct of Vettius Epagathus, and, standing up right in front of the legate's chair, beckoned to these weaker brethren to stand fast and play the man. Attalus was roasted in a red-hot iron chair. Blandina was not spared this time. She led her little brother Ponticus into the arena, encouraged the poor child —he was but fifteen years old—to meet his ghastly fate without flinching, and died herself last of all, fragile but unconquerable.[1]

One last outrage was not spared. The corpses of those who had died in the pestilential gaol were dragged forth and cast in a heap with the mangled remains of the other martyrs, and left for several days to fester. The Christians would have stolen them away by night, and when baffled in this endeavour, tried to soften the military guard by entreaties and bribes, but in vain. Finally, such remnants of the martyrs as the dogs had left were raked together and burned, and the ashes cast into the swift current of the Rhone. This final act of barbarity, as yet unheard of except in the case of Polycarp, was devised by the heathen under the idea that

[1] According to Gregory of Tours, *In Gloria Martyrum*, c. 48, there were forty-eight martyrs. But his list of names is exceedingly doubtful. He gives only forty-five names, omits Attalus, and makes Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, a priest in the Church of Lyons. In this strange blunder he is followed by Ado and Usuardus. It may be suspected that he took the names not from the lost martyrology of Eusebius, but from the Letter, and filled them up from local tradition of doubtful value.

their victims would thus be deprived even of their hope of resurrection. All these things happened in that golden age of the Antonines which the philosophic Emperor believed to be distinguished above all other virtues by that of humanity, and in one of the most civilized towns of the West. It was in truth an age of growing ignorance, vice, lawlessness, and brutality. We saw above in the case of Justin how justice was dealt out in the court of the city prefect, sternly but decently. Here we see how a provincial governor appointed by the Emperor himself might behave. The legate of Lyonese Gaul apparently had never heard of the rescripts of Trajan or Hadrian, and repeats all Pliny's mistakes, but with a ferocity of his own, laying about him like a wild beast. But he knew that his conduct would not be reproved by Marcus, and in fact it was expressly sanctioned.

The Letter of the churches of Vienne and Lyons was addressed to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, and was written not merely to claim their sympathy, but with the definite purpose of allaying the excitement kindled in those distant regions by the appearance of Montanism. If not actually penned by Irenaeus, who at the time of the persecution was priest in the Church of Lyons and succeeded Pothinus as bishop, it breathes throughout the gentle tolerant spirit of that eminently Christian man.

There were many prophets in the Gallic Church—the Celtic temperament has always been fervid—and some of them had come definitely under Montanist influence. The brethren knew and esteemed them. All had lain in the same prison, and in that dark and squalid den scenes of intense emotion had been witnessed, which had deeply affected the minds of the survivors, and taught them to look below the points of difference. They had seen the martyrs pleading with the fallen, 'forgiving all, binding none,' 'not leaving pain to their mother the Church, nor sedition and war to the brethren, but joy and peace and concord and love.'[1] Hence the Gallic Christians could not believe that even apostasy was beyond the reach of forgive-

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 2.

ness upon earth. A certain Alcibiades would taste no food in the prison but bread and water,[1] and endeavoured to persuade his fellow sufferers to follow his example. But Attalus in the night after the first butchery in the amphitheatre was instructed by a vision that Alcibiades was doing wrong in refusing the creatures of God, and causing scandal to the brethren. Alcibiades listened to the remonstrance of his fellow prophet, took the same sustenance as the rest, and gave thanks to God, setting an admirable example of Christian meekness and common sense. Thus in a beautiful spirit of loving wisdom the Gallic brethren had settled for themselves in the best way those burning questions of prophecy, forgiveness, and fasting which in the East were rending the Church. Hence they were peculiarly qualified to act the part of mediators. Unhappily all the brethren were not so wise.

It is a relief to turn from this shocking tragedy to facts so different that they seem at first sight to belong to another age. It was probably in the reign of Marcus, at any rate it was during the papacy of Anicetus between 154 and 166, that Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian who has been called 'the father of ecclesiastical history', travelled from the East to Corinth, and from Corinth to Rome. At each of his stopping-places he seems to have drawn up a list of the bishops who had presided over the churches, and in each city he found the same doctrines taught 'as the Law preaches, and the prophets and the Lord'. Nor does he appear to have met with any trouble in the course of his pilgrimage. A few years before, early in the episcopacy of Anicetus, Polycarp also had visited Rome, also without molestation. Melito of Sardis made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Places, probably in the reign of Marcus (he died, according to Harnack, in 180). Another most interesting visitor to the capital was Abercius, who was probably Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, where his tombstone was discovered by Sir W. M. Ramsay.[2] It still

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 3.

[2] He was probably also the same as Avircius Marcellus to whom the anonymous writer against Montanism dedicated his treatise. See Eus. *H. E.* v. 16. 3.

bears, though in mutilated form, the original inscription composed by the bishop himself, and happily it has been found possible to restore the full text. The inscription was as follows:—

'The citizen of a notable city, I made this tomb in my lifetime that in due time I might have here a resting-place for my body. Abercius by name, I am a disciple of the pure Shepherd who feedeth flocks of sheep on mountains and plains, who hath great eyes looking on all sides, for he taught me faithful writings. He also sent me to Rome, to see the King and the Queen arrayed in golden robes and golden slippers. And there I saw a people bearing a bright seal. I saw also the Syrian plain, and all the cities, even Nisibis across the Euphrates. And everywhere I had companions. In company with Paul I followed, while everywhere faith led the way, and set before me for food the fish from the fountain mighty and stainless which a pure virgin caught, and gave this to friends to eat always, having good wine and giving the mixed cup with bread. These words I, Abercius, standing by, caused to be written here. In sooth I was in the course of my seventy-second year. Let every friend who understandeth this pray for me. But no man shall lay another above me in my tomb. If any should do so he shall pay two thousand pieces of gold to the treasury of the Romans and a thousand pieces of gold to my good fatherland Hieropolis.'[1] (On the stone the name of the town is given as Hier*a*polis.)

Such was the epitaph which the good bishop caused to be engraved upon his monument in his own lifetime and in the reign of Marcus. Its Christian character is veiled in figures and allusions which not everyone would understand. It has been observed that a considerable group of Christian Phrygian inscriptions are of this nature, and the reason of this probably is that the brethren were unwilling to give offence to their neighbours by an outspoken declaration of their faith.[2]

To a 'friend' the inner sense of the allegory would be

[1] See Ramsay's *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 2, p. 722; Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 476 sqq. I have borrowed the translation there given, with a few alterations.

[2] See Mr. J. C. Anderson in *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire*, p. 197.

clear at a glance. The fish is a very common Christian emblem, denoting sometimes Christ Himself, especially in connexion with the Eucharist,[1] sometimes the believer who has been caught with the hook of Christ and drawn out of the water of Baptism by the pure virgin, the Church; the two senses are here blended. The virgin has a feast at which she regales her children with the fish, with a mixed cup and with bread. Further, she has imprinted upon them a seal, a common word for Baptism. Further, Abercius on his tombstone begs his friends to pray for him, clearly after his decease. From Hieropolis to Rome and Nisibis he found all these usages practised by the Church.

At Rome he had seen the King and Queen, the latter attired in great splendour. It is in accordance with the allusive character of the whole piece to suppose that he means not Marcus and Faustina, but Christ and His Bride.[2] If this is the right explanation, we may gather that he speaks not only of the spiritual beauty of the Church of Rome, but of a certain splendour and costliness in her services.

But, after all, the most striking fact is the great freedom of movement enjoyed by these eminent pilgrims. They did not sneak about in disguise. They would be received in each city with a certain modest pomp and excitement. The brethren would meet and escort them, and there would be gatherings in their honour. All this at a time when every Christian's life hung by a thread. There must have been

[1] The use of the fish as an emblem was suggested partly by the saying of Christ to the Apostles, 'I will make you fishers of men,' partly by the two fishes in the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Very early *ἰχθύς* was explained by the initial letters of the formulae *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς Σωτήρ*. See Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, vol. i. chaps. 14 and 15, §§ 76, 77, 83, and the pictures in vol. ii; Tert. *De Bapt.* i; *Orac. Sibyllina*, viii. 217 sqq.; the writer of these lines was a Christian of the second or, as Harnack thinks, of the third century.

[2] According to the Letter from the Emperor to Euxenianus inserted in the Life of Abercius by Symeon Metaphrastes (see Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i, p. 476), Abercius had been summoned to Rome by Marcus to heal his daughter Lucilla, who was possessed by a devil. The Letter is probably not earlier than the fourth century, and probably also is a mere fiction based upon the phrase in the inscription that 'the Shepherd sent me to Rome to see the King and Queen'.

some understanding that so long as things were quietly managed the authorities would not interfere. But throughout the second century the blackguard mob might at any moment force the governor's hand, especially if it was known that the Emperor would regard this turbulence as the fault of the Christians.

CHAPTER XV

MONTANISM

Shortly after the middle of the second century Montanism made its appearance. The sect was known also as that of the Phrygians or Cataphrygians, for it arose in that land of Phrygia which had been the home of Cybele and Attys and the Corybantes. Enthusiasm had always been at home in that district. But it should be noticed that the Montanists spoke of themselves as the New Prophets, or the Spiritual.

Montanism has been regarded as an attempt at a resuscitation of the primitive Church, a violent protest against the way in which the prophets had been made to run in harness by the growing authority of their bishops. There is some truth in this, yet it is not the right point of view. The sect called itself the New Prophecy because it regarded the work to which it was appointed not as a reaction but as a step in advance. It preached not the kingdom of Christ but the reign of the Paraclete, to which the Gospel had been the prologue and the imperfect prologue. Christ had introduced a New Law, but sparingly and with reserve out of compassion for the weakness of mankind. Now the time had come for a great forward movement, and the whole counsel of God must be declared with unflinching severity.

Montanism was in fact one of those outbreaks of mysticism which from time to time have visited the Church, giving it new life yet threatening it with destruction. The earliest was that which occurred at Corinth, and probably in other of the Pauline churches. Later on we read of the Fathers of the Desert, of Glycerius the Deacon in the time of St. Basil, of Priscillian in Spain; again in the thirteenth century of the Fraticelli and of Joachim of Flora and his Eternal Gospel. In the fifteenth century we find the Friends of God, in the sixteenth the Zwickau prophets

and Anabaptists, in the seventeenth Madame de Guyon and the Quietists in France, and in England the Ranters and the Quakers, in the eighteenth the prophets with whom John Wesley was at one time familiar. There have been many similar movements, some of them even in our own time. Mysticism is the very heart and soul of religion, but it frets against any restraint and is apt to revolt. The revolt assumes different forms, of which the most remarkable are antinomianism and asceticism. Montanism took the latter direction, as was indeed natural, for it was occasioned by belief in the near approach of the end of the world and a fiery desire for the crown of martyrdom. It was the answer of the zealots of the Church to the persecution of Marcus Aurelius. The object of its rigorous discipline was to train athletes for the arena, men and women so hardened to endurance that prison and torment no longer seemed dreadful.

We read of a 'Phrygian' who was probably a Montanist in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp about 156 A.D. Twenty years later on we find two others, Alexander and Alcibiades, among the martyrs of Lyons. In the interval Montanus of Ardabau, a village in Mysia, had given the movement a leader and a name.[1] He first attracted notice about 165, or even as early as 155; the name of the unknown proconsul Gratus, in whose time, according to one authority, he began his work, may be, as Bonwetsch supposed,[2] a clerical error for Quadratus, and may denote either the Quadratus who governed Asia in 155, or the other who held the same office in 165. There are, however, other reasons which are thought to make the latter date preferable. Montanus was himself a prophet, but little is known of him; he appears to have vanished quickly from the stage, and the work was carried on by two remarkable women, first by Prisca (or Priscilla), and afterwards by Maximilla. Maximilla is thought to have died about 179, Prisca some few years before. Maximilla proclaimed that she was to be the last of the prophets, and she is the last known to us by name. But there were others, for instance

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 16. [2] Bonwetsch, *Gesch. d. Montanismus*, 152.

the sister of whom Tertullian speaks. The prophets, whether men or women—they were mostly women—do not appear to have been regarded as the leaders of the sect, though they were highly venerated and implicitly obeyed. But the Montanists retained the usual hierarchy, and we may suppose that those men who appear as their champions, managers, and literary representatives, Alcibiades, Theodotus, Themison, Asterius, Urbanus, Proculus, Aeschines, were all presbyters.

The appearance of the new sect filled Asia Minor with anger and alarm. It was the first distinct schism. For the first time it was openly maintained by Christians that the Catholic Church was not holy and did not really believe in the teaching of the Spirit. The authority of the bishops was set at naught, and an ignorant band of Phrygian peasants was flouting the intelligence, the learning, and even the religious character of their pastors and masters, and this at a time when the unity of the Church was absolutely necessary to its existence. At the same time Montanism had many sympathizers within the Church, its main principles were indisputable, and even its legalism and asceticism were only an exaggeration of tendencies that were rapidly coming into favour. The only point upon which it lay obviously open to attack was its notion of Inspiration, a word which never has been and never can be accurately defined. What is a True Prophet? what is a False Prophet The natural and usual test of conformity to the creed of the Church could not be applied, for the Montanists were strictly orthodox. Accordingly other methods were tried. A band of self-appointed inquisitors set out to Pepuza to try Priscilla. They watched her as she fell into the prophetic trance, and then proposed to use exorcism and cast the devil out of her. Her friends naturally resisted this proposal. There must have been a scene of the wildest excitement, as we may judge from the oath which Julius of Debeltum appended to the Catholic report of the proceedings[1]: 'As God liveth in heaven the blessed Sotas of Anchialos wished to cast the wicked spirit out of Priscilla,

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 19.

and the hypocrites would not let him.' A little later a similar attempt was made upon Maximilla by Zoticus of Cumane and Julianus of Apamea with the same result.[1]

The most furious charges were levelled against the sect. Montanus and Maximilla were said to have hanged themselves like the traitor Judas. Theodotus is said to have been raised into the air by the spirit of deceit, and then dashed down like Simon Magus. Montanist martyrs, it was argued, could not be martyrs at all because they were not of the Church: one of them, Alexander, was said to have been executed by the proconsul Aemilius Frontinus on a well-attested charge of brigandage. Nay, before the end of the second century it was currently believed that the Montanists celebrated their Eucharist with the flesh and blood of a murdered child.[2] The Catholics themselves had been charged with this horrible crime by the heathen, and now they were neither ashamed nor afraid to assert that some Christians were guilty of it.

The Montanists were condemned and excommunicated by several Asiatic synods before 193. These are probably the first Christian synods known to us. It may be noticed that, according to Tertullian, the custom of assembling in periodical synods was at this time peculiar to the Greek Churches. About the same time, perhaps a year or two later, the sect invaded Rome and was condemned by the reigning Pope (most probably Victor), who had been inclined to regard them with tolerance, but allowed himself to be persuaded by the Sabellian Praxeas. But earlier Popes, of whom Soter was one, seem to have expressed disapproval of the New Prophets. The West was much less hostile to Montanism than Asia Minor. The martyrs of Lyons pleaded earnestly for toleration, though they did not approve the extravagances of the sect. Irenaeus does not mention it in his list of heresies, and Tertullian did not forfeit the respect of the Church by his secession.

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 16, 17.

[2] The charge was refuted by Tertullian in his treatise *De Ecstasi*, written in answer to the charges made by Pope Soter and Apollonius: *Praedestinatus*, 26. See Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 276.

From the date of these condemnations the Montanists organized themselves as a separate Church. At first they appear to have made some headway. Tertullian, their most distinguished convert, was captured in 207, and the Christians of Thyatira went over to them in a body. A synod held at Iconium in the time of Firmilian ordered that converts from Montanism should not be received into the Church without re-baptism,[1] in spite of their orthodoxy. Hippolytus wrote against them, but briefly and with good sense. Clement of Alexandria proposed to make them the subject of a treatise, but did not fulfil his intention. In the fourth century there were numbers of Montanists to be found in Cappadocia, Galatia, Phrygia, Cilicia, and even in Constantinople.[2] But with the establishment of the Christian Empire the old hatred breaks out against them as furiously as ever. Constantine persecuted them. Cyril of Jerusalem renews the wicked accusation of child-murder, and adds other enormities unspeakable in the presence of women.[3] Basil of Caesarea charges them with blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.[4] Epiphanius[5] again repeats the infanticide myth, and regards them without doubt as heretics. The so-called seventh canon of the Council of Constantinople affirms that they are not to be regarded as Christians at all, and a glance at the index of the Theodosian Code will reveal a number of cruel laws directed against this harmless and maligned sect, whose main offence was that they were foolish enough to prefer a prophet to a bishop.

What was it that the Montanists did or taught? The writings of their apologists were not thought worthy of preservation, indeed they were probably not very valuable additions to knowledge. But we still possess a handful of their prophecies, and in the later treatises of Tertullian we find a tolerably complete account of the New Prophecy given by a convinced and intelligent believer.

They established a new Church modelled upon the lines of the old, but with certain significant modifications. The new Church had what the old Church had not, a Holy Place;

[1] Bonwetsch, 170. [2] Bonwetsch, 171. [3] *Cat. Ill.* xvi. 8.
[4] *Epp.* 188; Migne, 664. [5] *Haer.* 48.

indeed it had two sanctuaries, Pepuza and Tymium, a couple of obscure villages in the wilds of Phrygia. Pepuza was the abode of Prisca; there, as she affirmed, Christ had visited her in the form of a woman clad in shining raiment, given to her the gift of prophecy, and promised that on that spot the New Jerusalem should descend from heaven to earth. Tymium was possibly the home of Maximilla. To these two places pilgrims resorted from every quarter.

The Montanist Church possessed a central fund. Our knowledge of their financial arrangements is scanty and obscure, but we may gather that they had regular collectors and paymasters, that the members of the Church were expected to make regular and definite contributions, that the clergy received fixed salaries, and also even the prophets and confessors.[1] To us with our modern notions this is familiar, and seems not unreasonable, but it occasioned grave scandal. The Catholic Church had as yet no source of income except the offertory and occasional gifts. Donations of either kind were, or were supposed to be, purely voluntary; the free alms of the faithful were delivered to the bishop, and by him distributed among the clergy, the poor, and the sick. It was thought especially wrong that prophets should receive direct payment for the exercise of a special gift of the Holy Spirit—though in some of the Catholic churches there were widows whose special duty it was to wait for a revelation, and these no doubt were supported. Upon the whole the offence of the Montanists was that they set the words 'the labourer is worthy of his hire' above the command of our Lord, 'Freely ye have received, freely give,' but in practice all churches have been driven to do the same.

The most remarkable feature of Montanism is its moral rigorism. This was the conclusion drawn from several axioms. 'That is good and best,' says Tertullian, 'which God commands. I count it audacity to question the goodness of a divine precept. We are not bound to observe it because it is good, but because God has enjoined it.'[2] Again he tells us that 'What is not expressly allowed in Scripture

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 18. [2] *De poenitentia*, 5.

is forbidden'. This iron, unhistorical rule of exegesis was adopted by the Puritans of Hooker's time, but only as regards ritual and Church government. Further, he held that Christ's revelation was not complete, that even in the Gospel something had been kept back because of the hardness of men's hearts, but that now the time had come when the full rigour of the Christian law might be proclaimed.

In many points the uncompromising rigour of Tertullian's opinions was shared by numerous teachers in the Catholic Church. If he insists upon the veiling of all unmarried women, on strict avoidance of Gentile amusements, on the sinfulness of flight in times of persecution, and of second marriage, on the duty of renouncing every trade or vocation which was in the remotest degree connected with idolatry —even teaching in school, service in the army, the acceptance of any kind of office under the State; if again he maintains that for 'death sins', by which he means apostasy, homicide, and sexual impurity, there is no forgiveness after baptism, he is saying only what many others said. Singularly enough the Montanist practice which gave the greatest offence was that of excessive fasting.

At the end of the second century the Church regarded no fast as obligatory except that which they believed to be ordained by our Lord Himself in the words, 'The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast.'[1] Accordingly the whole Church kept Lent upon Good Friday and Easter Eve. Further, they fasted commonly upon the 'stations', that is to say, on all Wednesdays and Fridays, but these fasts were regarded as voluntary. But any bishop might order his flock to fast on such days as he chose to appoint when any great affliction was hanging over the Church. In all cases it seems to have been the custom to fast only till the ninth hour, which was the usual time of the *cena*: the earlier meal, the *prandium*, was dropped, and it appears to have been usual to pay the cost of this meal into the treasury of the Church.[2] The Montanist fasts were much more frequent, were all compulsory, and were prolonged to nightfall, to the time when

[1] Matt. ix. 15; Mark ii. 20; Luke v. 35. [2] *De Iei.* 13.

our Lord was laid in the tomb.[1] Even at this late hour no food was taken except water, dry bread, and the driest kinds of vegetables, nor was the believer allowed to take a bath in the course of the day.[2]

The Montanists retained the hierarchy, but assigned to them a much lower position than that which they already claimed for themselves. They held that the Church was the whole body of believers, that the clergy were made by the laity, that the functions of the clergy were created by the law of the Church, that the priesthood lay dormant in every believer, and that, if pressing necessity arose, every act of the priest could be performed by the layman. The power of the bishop must have been further restricted by the existence of special officers of finance, and by the severe restraints imposed upon the bestowal of absolution. Their power of teaching, again, was greatly circumscribed by the veneration with which the prophets were regarded.

The prophet was no new apparition. We have seen Hermas uttering his visions in Rome, and in the East the seers of the New Testament had had many successors, Ammia of Philadelphia, Quadratus, Ignatius, and in a limited sense Polycarp. Nor does there seem to have been anything novel in the mode of the Montanist prophecy. When the ecstasy came upon Prisca she put her face between her knees, like Elijah, and heard voices. Often the vision came during the worship of the Church. Tertullian tells us[3] of a gifted sister who fell asleep whilst he was preaching about the nature of the soul. When service ended she declared the vision that had come to her, how she had seen a soul just as he had described it, soft and bright, coloured like the sky, and in form exactly like a man. It may have been the same sister who saw in a vision the Holy Trinity, again in some kind of material semblance which very aptly illustrated the teaching of Tertullian. We may suspect that these hypersensitive women derived the substance of their visions largely from the teaching of their spiritual director. When another prophet cried aloud in the name of the Paraclete, 'The Church can forgive sin, but I will not

[1] *De Iei.* 10. [2] *De Iei.* 1. [3] *De An.* 9.

do it, lest they should sin again', we may perhaps apply the same explanation.[1] We may guess that Montanism made the prophets rather than that the prophets made Montanism.

It was said that Prisca and Maximilla dyed their hair, painted their eyelids with the black pigment known as *stibi*, and dressed like great ladies. It might be that these poor Phrygian women were dressed up like dolls to express the veneration of their peasant devotees, but probably the statement is only one of the many slanders with which they were pelted. We may be sure that the sister in Tertullian's Church was not allowed to indulge in any such feminine vanity.

The Montanist theology was generally regarded as quite correct. Even Epiphanius, a keen and hostile judge, acquits them on this indictment. Hippolytus indeed, early in the third century, asserts that some of them were Noetians and confounded the Persons of the Father and the Son.[2] Was there any ground for this charge?

Hippolytus brought the same charge of Noetianism or Sabellianism against two Popes, Zephyrinus and Callistus.[3] Probably he was wrong in both instances. Tertullian about the same time was speaking of the Persons of the Trinity as 'of the same substance', a phrase which by the middle of the third century appears to have been generally adopted by the theologians of Rome. But in the East this expression was regarded as Sabellian by that Council of Antioch which condemned Paul of Samosata, and even at Nicaea by those divines who, though they rejected Arianism, objected vehemently to the insertion of 'homoousion' into the Creed. It is possible that Zephyrinus and Callistus used the same language as Tertullian, and that this is why Hippolytus calls them Sabellians.

At the same time it is to be noticed that Tertullian himself may in one respect be called Sabellian, for, though he insisted very strongly upon the personal distinctions in the Trinity in this dispensation, he yet believed that the Word only became personally distinct at Creation, and probably also that He ceases to be personally distinct when all things

[1] Tert. *De Pud.* 21. [2] *Phil.* viii. 19; x. 26. [3] *Phil.* ix. 11.

have been finally put under His feet.[1] It was the doctrine afterwards of Marcellus of Ancyra, who was for some time supported by Rome and even by Athanasius. It is possible that Hippolytus was thinking of this point, and it is likely enough that Zephyrinus would not have regarded this particular opinion as heretical.

But if Tertullian may be taken to represent the general doctrine of his fellow believers, it may be maintained, not merely that the Montanists were orthodox, but that they contributed greatly to the formation of the later creed. As far as our documents enable us to form a positive conclusion, they were the first to enunciate the 'homoousion', and they were also the first to bestow the title 'God' upon the Holy Spirit[2] nearly two centuries before the so-called Creed of Constantinople. Thus in doctrine as well as in discipline these despised and hated sectaries were pioneers, whose main offence was that they were before their time.

It was a natural consequence of the authority allowed to the prophets that the Montanists did not regard the Bible as complete. This was evidently the main question involved; and, as the New Prophets claimed authority to deal with both doctrine and discipline, it is also evident that the whole future of the Church was imperilled.

But the question is also one of infinite difficulty. All Scripture is inspired by God. May we invert this proposition and say that every utterance inspired by God is equivalent to Scripture? The Holy Spirit guides the Church into all truth. But does He impart new truths, or does He merely bestow a clearer understanding of the old? Is He a Higher teacher, or is He simply the interpreter of Christ? All parties agreed that there had been false prophets, and that other false prophets were yet to come. But what were the tests by which the false could be distinguished from the true?

The test directed by our Lord is contained in the words, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' By this rule the Gnostic prophets had been condemned; their doctrines and their moral axioms were not those of the Church. But

[1] *Adv. Prax.* 4. 5, 6. [2] *Adv. Prax.* 3. 13.

there was the greatest difficulty in applying the rule to the Montanists. How could it be said that these also were convicted by their fruits?

Some said that no true prophet would accept payment. There is some truth in this. A clairvoyant who holds a séance, answers questions, and charges for admission, is clearly not an oracle of God. But even prophets must live; and fees, free but customary alms, regular ecclesiastical allowances, run into one another, and are not easily distinguished. The case of the Prophet is analogous to that of the Priest.

Some again maintained that a prophet ought not to speak in ecstasy.[1] But St. Paul certainly saw visions in trance, and the same thing is true of St. Peter. It was argued again that the Montanist ecstasy was parecstasy, simulated, that is to say, or artificially induced. There have been instances of this. Some of the heathen seers helped themselves into their trances by means of the fumes of hot springs, and there have been plenty of impostors in ancient and in modern times. Again, some of the oracles of the New Prophets were regarded as blasphemous; on one occasion Montanus exclaimed, 'I am the Lord God Almighty coming down in man,' where God is represented as speaking not through man, but in man. But even to this analogies might be found in the Old Testament.

Others again assailed, as we have seen, the moral life of the prophets, and were led into assertions that we must regard as odious calumnies.

The Catholics were on much safer ground when they maintained that the Bible was complete. From this time begins the fixation of the Canon, a critical sifting process by which certain books that had almost obtained a place in Holy Scripture, such as Hermas, Clement, Barnabas, Enoch, the Gospels according to the Hebrews and according to the Egyptians, were relegated to a lower place, not allowed to be read in church, though still treated with respect, while others were wholly rejected as forgeries. Henceforth we may say that the right of a document to a place in the New

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 17; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 48.

Testament was decided by two tests, not that of inspiration alone, but that of apostolicity as well. Of these two tests the latter was the decisive one. Christ and His Apostles had delivered to the Church not only the truth but the whole truth.

Scripture understood in this sense continued to be for a long time regarded as the sole arbiter of the faith of the Church. It needed interpretation, as do all written documents, and this was looked upon as the task of the Church, discharged by the clergy, especially by the bishops, as the only qualified exponents of the Bible.

At first they were believed, and they believed themselves, to teach nothing but what was expressly or by undeniable inference contained in the Sacred Books, and their 'tradition' consisted merely of the Creed. But tradition grew and developed; its contents increased, and each new accretion claimed the same authority as the original deposit. Thus tradition eventually stepped into the place that had been claimed by the Montanist prophets, and added to revelation in precisely the same way as Prisca and Maximilla. Here also the Montanists were only before their time.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EASTER CONTROVERSY

In the midst of the great controversies occasioned by Gnosticism and Montanism, the Church of the second century was agitated by another of minor consequence, relating to the date upon which the great festival of Easter ought to be celebrated. A considerable body of the Asiatic Churches, regarding Easter as the permanent antitype of the Jewish Passover, kept the feast upon the exact day of the Passover, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and hence are commonly called by the Latin nickname Quartodecimani[1]. The whole of the Western Church and a great part of the Eastern Church divided the festival as we divide it still, commemorating the Lord's Resurrection on the Sunday after Nisan 14, the Crucifixion on the previous Friday. This divergence of practice was felt to be a grave inconvenience. One part of the Church was still fasting while the others were keeping feast.

The great stronghold of Quartodecimanism was proconsular Asia. What other provinces followed the usage we do not learn precisely from the history of Eusebius, but Athanasius states that Cilicia, Mesopotamia, and Syria were Quartodeciman in the fourth century.[2] In the East, Palestine, Pontus, Osrhoene, were Non-observants; so were Greece, Rome, Gaul, and many other dioceses.[3]

On three occasions during the second century the controversy assumed an acute form.

[1] Τέσσαρες καὶ δεκατῖται in Epiph. *Haer.* 50. Polycrates and Irenaeus call them οἱ τηροῦντες, 'the Observants' of the Passover, and speak of the other party as οἱ μὴ τηροῦντες, Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 6, 14.

[2] See *Ep. ad Afros*, 2, Benedic. ed. vol. ii, p. 892. It would appear, therefore, that Asia had renounced the usage before the Council of Nicaea. But the Emperor Constantine affirms that Cilicia was not Quartodeciman; Eus. *Vit. Const.* iii. 19. He may mean that Cilicia had already signified its acceptance of the conciliar decree. There were still a few Quartodecimans at Antioch in the time of Chrysostom; *Oratio in eos qui primo Pascha ieiunant*, vol. i, p. 606, ed. Montfaucon.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* v. 23. 3 sq.

The first occurred about 155. At that time the aged Polycarp visited Rome to confer with Pope Anicetus about certain points on which they were not in complete agreement. Among them was the Easter question. 'Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp not to observe, for the latter had always been an Observant, following John the disciple of our Lord and the other apostles, nor could Polycarp persuade Anicetus to become an Observant, for Anicetus said he was bound to maintain the usage of his predecessors. Yet they communicated with one another, and Anicetus allowed Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist in the church as a mark of respect. And they departed from one another in peace.'[1] Irenaeus adds that this mutual toleration had endured through the episcopates of Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus, though they had not permitted their clergy to adopt the Quartodeciman use. The difficulty had therefore been felt for some time in Rome.

A little later, somewhere about 160,[2] a renewal of the controversy was occasioned by the martyrdom of Sagaris, Bishop of Laodicea. Sagaris, who was an Observant, was put to death about the time of Easter; hence there arose an eager debate between the adherents of the two parties in the Laodicene Church. On this occasion the learned Bishop Melito of Sardis wrote a treatise 'on the Passover' in defence of the Quartodeciman view. About the same time Apollinarius of Hieropolis also wrote on the opposite side. It would appear, then, that even in the province of Asia opinion was not unanimous.

Some thirty years later, about 190, broke out the greatest excitement of all. Victor, the then Pope, was urgent that the question should be decided once for all, and on his instance numerous synods were held[3] in West and East, and many epistles were written by Bacchyllus of Corinth and other bishops. Eusebius[4] enumerates only

[1] Irenaeus in Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 16.

[2] The date of the proconsulate of Servilius or Sergius Paulus cannot be accurately fixed. See Harnack, *Chron.* i, p. 359.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 8.

[4] *H. E.* v. 23. 8.

those which expressed acquiescence in the non-observant practice. On the other hand, the synod of the province of Asia stood firm for the opposite view, and their chief, Polycrates of Ephesus, sent a letter to Victor and the Roman Church boldly justifying their ancient practice. Polycrates appeals to the authority of those stars of the Church whose bodies slept in Asia.[1] Philip the Apostle had been buried at Hieropolis; two of his prophetic daughters in the same place, the third at Ephesus. John, who lay in the Lord's bosom at the Last Supper, who was a priest and wore the mitre, and was a martyr and teacher, slept at Ephesus.[2] He cites also Polycarp of Smyrna, Thraseas of Eumenea, Sagaris of Laodicea, all bishops and all martyrs, Papirius, the successor of Polycarp, and Melito of Sardis. Last of all, Polycrates insists upon his own claim to be heard. Seven of his kinsmen had been bishops, all of whom had kept their Easter on the fourteenth of Nisan. He himself had lived for sixty-five years in the Lord, had conversed with strangers from every part of the world, and studied all Holy Scripture. He was not afraid of censure, and could not give way. 'For those who are greater than I have said we must obey God rather than men.'

Victor replied to this bold defence by excommunicating all the diocese of Asia and the neighbouring churches who ventured to side with Polycrates.[3] But many bishops re-

[1] *H. E.* v. 24. The Apostle Philip is here confused with the Evangelist of the same name. Harnack, *Chron.* i. 667–8. It is singular, also, that Polycrates speaks of three daughters, while in Acts xxi. 9 we are told that there were four. Lightfoot, however (*Colossians*, p. 45), maintains that Polycrates is quite accurate.

[2] Here also Polycrates may be following an unsound tradition. When he calls John *μάρτυς* he may possibly be referring to Papias, who stated that John had been killed by the Jews; see the Papian Fragments in de Boor, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band v, Heft 2, p. 170. Yet, if this be the case, Polycrates failed to see that he was destroying his principal witness. The most probable explanation is that he was using *μάρτος* as meaning *witness* only, and alluding to the exile of St. John at Patmos, but he uses the word twice in the next lines in the sense of 'martyr'.

[3] There can be no doubt that he did actually excommunicate them—*ἀκοινωνήτους πάντας ἄρδην τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ἀνακηρύττων ἀδελφούς*, Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 10. The preceding words, *ἀποτέμνειν πειρᾶται*, mean that he 'tried to cut them off', not knowing that he had no power to do so.

fused to become accomplices in this uncharitable act. In particular, Irenaeus of Lyons wrote to Victor in a tone of urgent remonstrance, pointing out that the churches differed not only as to the date of Easter but also as to the duration of the preceding Lenten fast. Some thought they ought to fast one day, some two, others more, while others fasted for forty continuous hours, from noon on Good Friday to four o'clock upon Easter morning. These varieties of usage, he adds, had never been allowed to disturb the peace of the Church. He reminds Victor, also, how his own predecessors, including Anicetus, had treated the Easter question as non-essential. In fine, Victor's ill-judged excommunication remained without effect. The debate was not resumed until the fourth century, and the Quartodeciman use did not die out till some time after the Councils of Arles and Nicaea.

It is not quite agreed what was the precise nature of that use, and in later times there were divergent practices among Quartodecimans. But, according to Eusebius,[1] they kept the Passover Feast on Nisan 14, whichever day of the week Nisan 14 happened to fall, whereas the rest of the Church agreed that the fast ought not to be broken before the Day of the Resurrection, that is to say, upon the Sunday after Nisan 14. With this agrees the testimony of Irenaeus.[2] Even on Nisan 14 they fasted up to the hour when the Last Supper was celebrated in the evening (see Chrysostom quoted above[3]). Epiphanius affirms that they kept their Passover on one day only. What they celebrated on this one day was primarily the Last Supper, which they regarded as the Paschal Feast, involving all that was typified in the Paschal Feast, the Eucharist, the Sacrifice of the Lamb, and the Resurrection. So that they commemorated in one act all the chief moments of the Passion.

Another interesting but not very easy question is, Upon what authorities did they rely? Epiphanius tells us[4] that they laid great stress upon the Mosaic Law, in which they found a curse pronounced against all who did not keep

[1] *H. E.* v. 23. 1.
[2] In Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 11.
[3] p. 197.
[4] *Haer.* 50. 1.

Passover on the fourteenth day, and no doubt their main reason was the necessity of conformity to Jewish usage.

But what use did they make of the authority of the Gospels? Polycrates, as was seen above, rested his case chiefly upon the authority of St. John. And yet the Gospel of St. John afforded the main argument for the other side. Thus Apollinarius of Hieropolis says, 'They affirm that on Nisan 14 the Lord ate the lamb with His disciples and suffered on the great day of unleavened bread (i. e. on Nisan 15), and that this is the account given by Matthew.'[1] Clement of Alexandria[2] maintains that the Last Supper was held upon Nisan 13, and that the Crucifixion fell upon 14.[3] The Quartodecimans, in fact, taking their stand with the Synoptists, believed that the Last Supper was the Passover, and replied to their opponents, 'I must do what the Lord Himself did.'[4] The Non-observants rejoined that our Lord did not eat the Passover at all, that He was the Paschal Lamb, and was slain at the time when the Lamb was sacrificed in accordance with the old Scriptures. This was the teaching of St. John's Gospel; at the same time we must not forget that the same view had been placed upon record at a much earlier date by St. Paul.[5]

Why, then, did the Quartodecimans claim St. John as their patron? It may be observed that Polycrates, though he must have known the Fourth Gospel, does not quote it. What he affirms is that St. John kept the Passover Feast upon Nisan 14 according to 'the Gospel',[6] and 'the Gospel' is a term often used to denote the general sense of all the four Gospels. He was relying, in all probability, upon Asiatic traditions, the historical value of which is highly questionable; some of them were undoubtedly unsound;[7]

[1] *Chron. Pasch.* i, p. 13, ed. Bonn. [2] Ib. p. 14.

[3] Lightfoot (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 245) and Hefele (vol. i, p. 311, Eng. trans., 2nd ed.) believe that Apollinarius was himself a Quartodeciman. But the author of the *Chron. Pasch.*, who knew much more about his works than we do, clearly reckons him among the opponents of Quartodecimanism.

[4] Hippolytus in *Chron. Pasch.* i, p. 13.

[5] 1 Cor. v. 7. [6] Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 6.

[7] See notes upon his letter above, p. 199, and remarks upon the Elders of Irenaeus below, pp. 224–5.

he believed, also, with all the men of his time, that the canonical gospels did not and could not contradict one another. If he saw any difficulty he solved it by following the lead of the Synoptists; they were three against one; and forced the Gospel of St. John into harmony with them. Apollinarius took the other way. He complained that the Quartodecimans made St. Matthew contradict St. John, and forced the former into agreement with the latter. The problem is well known, and is still unsolved.

The Quartodecimans were not charged with undervaluing Easter. But their use was certainly tainted with Judaism. They affirmed that our Lord kept the Passover in His last year as He had done in the preceding years; it was replied that in His last year He did not keep but was the Passover. They affirmed that He obeyed the Law; it was replied that He fulfilled and transfigured the Law. Further, it would seem to follow from their principles that Christians are still bound to keep all Jewish holy days, including the Sabbath. Only gradually did the Church come to understand how full was the emancipation from Jewish observances. The Sabbath was still kept by some at Antioch in the time of Ignatius. The rule of prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, that of abstaining from the taste of blood, that of veiling women in the presence of men, were all of Jewish origin, and all gradually fell into disuse. The Church rightly felt that in all such matters it was free to make its own laws according to the dictates of its own enlightened conscience. Freedom from the letter in all matters ceremonial was the great principle involved in the Quartodeciman controversy. We cannot exactly say that freedom was thus secured, for the immediate result was a drawn battle, nor indeed was it ever altogether secured, for in some respects the Church came more and more under the bondage of the letter. But at any rate the principle was then asserted, and in course of time prevailed as to the special point on which it was challenged.

There was, however, an aspect of the debate which is not so satisfactory. What is the Church which possesses the power of legislation in matters non-essential?

Irenaeus and the Asiatics maintained that every diocese or province could regulate its own affairs so long as the faith was not violated. Varieties of use, even on such matters as the date of Easter or the duration of the Lenten Fast, which from the point of view of ceremonial were of high importance, ought, they thought, to be tolerated, and indeed ought to be regarded with satisfaction as a proof of the richness and vigour of the life which from one root could send forth branches diverse in appearance yet equally fruitful.[1] But Victor maintained that a bare majority of the Church could and ought to impose its will upon the minority even in matters non-essential, and that Uniformity was as important as Unity. At the time the bulk of the Church was not prepared to enforce this unfortunate opinion. But at Nicaea this was the view which carried the day.

There is still one point that deserves attention. In the second century astronomical science was nearly unknown to the Jews, and Christians were in little better plight. It was looked upon as a notable achievement when Anatolius of Laodicea, about 270, adopted from some heathen scientific work the lunar cycle of 19 years, which had been discovered by the old Greek astronomer Meton in the time of the Peloponnesian War, more than six centuries before. Now upon this cycle depends the correct fixation of Nisan 14. It follows, therefore, that in the second century, and for the greater part of the third, the whole Church must have been not infrequently in error as to the true date of Easter. Most dioceses, therefore, must have been compelled to seek direction from others. The question arises, who supplied this most necessary information.

In the East, Palestine, and probably the other provinces also, received the date of Easter from Alexandria,[2] where was the Museum, the chief home of heathen science in the Empire. Whether the Alexandrian clergy actually applied to the University Professors for assistance may be doubted; if the statement which has just been cited about Anatolius is correct, they can hardly have done so, but must have

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 13. [2] Ib. v. 25.

guided themselves by some other and less perfect cycle than that of Meton. Rome and the Western Church generally followed their own lights. Thus, though the majority of dioceses agreed as against the Quartodecimans, there must have been many occasions on which they disagreed with one another, and in fact we find such disagreement in Gaul and Spain in the sixth century,[1] and in the British Church in the time of which Bede writes. There must have been many similar cases.

[1] Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* v. 17, x. 23.

CHAPTER XVII

IRENAEUS

We have already met with the name of this eminent man in connexion with the Gnostic, the Montanist, and the Quartodeciman controversies. In all these disputes he acted a prominent part, and in the last two he pleaded for tolerance and peace. His name means Peaceful, and never was any one better named.

He was a Greek, born in Asia Minor about 130. The date of his death is quite uncertain; it has been fixed at 202, partly upon the ground of a late and worthless tradition that he suffered martyrdom under Severus, whose persecution began probably at that time. The ground for this tradition may be found in the fact that during the civil war between Severus and Albinus, in 197, Lyons was sacked, and great numbers of its defenders and inhabitants were put to the sword. Irenaeus may conceivably have perished in this frightful massacre, though the Christians had taken no part in the rebellion.[1]

In Asia Irenaeus had been familiar with Polycarp of Smyrna, and had been acquainted with other venerable leaders of the Asiatic churches whom he calls the Elders. Thus he forms a most important personal link between Gaul, Rome, and Asia between the end of the second century and the closing years of the first. Polycarp was probably born in the year in which Jerusalem was captured by Titus.

In Asia, again, he had known Florinus, who late in life became a Gnostic, but at that time held some place of importance 'in the royal palace', an obscure phrase which

[1] See Tert. *Ad Scap.* 2, *Apol.* 35, and Schiller, i, p. 716 sqq.

may possibly signify that Florinus served in the household of Antoninus Pius when the future Emperor was proconsul of Asia, but may also mean that he was an official in the Roman palace, who happened to be on a visit to Smyrna.[1] From Asia Irenaeus made his way to Rome, where he appears to have been teaching publicly in 155 or 156, at the time of the martyrdom of Polycarp.[2] It is possible that Polycarp had taken Irenaeus to Rome when he visited Anicetus, and that he left him there.

We next hear of Irenaeus as priest in the Church of Lyons, in the year 177, when the persecution broke out. It may or may not have been he that composed the Letter of the Gallic martyrs to Asia and Phrygia. Probably it was not, for the martyrs appear to have dispatched him before their death on a mission to Eleutherus of Rome. Possibly this journey saved the life of Irenaeus; if he did not leave Lyons till after the final tragedy, we do not know how it was that he escaped molestation.

He succeeded Pothinus, who died in prison, in the episcopate, and a not unimportant question has lately been raised as to the extent of the jurisdiction belonging at this time to the Bishop of Lyons. Eusebius[3] speaks of 'the dioceses in Gaul over which Irenaeus was bishop'. From these words Duchesne infers[4] that outside of the old *provincia Narbonensis* there was but one bishop, the Bishop of Lyons, for all the Celtic and the German provinces. Harnack, on the other hand, is of opinion that there were already several Celtic bishoprics over whom Irenaeus was metropolitan,[5] and this is the more probable view, as will be apparent to any one who reads the whole of the passage of Eusebius. For the historian is here enumerating the synods which were

[1] See the letter to Florinus, Eus. *H. E.* v. 20.

[2] See Lipsius's article on Polycarp in *Dict. of Christian Biog.* Harnack (*Chron.* i, p. 332) thinks it impossible that Irenaeus should have taught at this time in Rome, on the ground that in 177 the Lyonnese martyrs recommended him to Eleutherus as if he were unknown to the Roman bishop. But the letter of commendation (Eus. *H. E.* v. 4) can hardly be pressed to this extent.

[3] *H. E.* v. 23.

[4] *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, i, p. 41 sqq.

[5] *Mission*, p. 323 sqq.

assembled to discuss the Quartodeciman question, and in each case gives only the name of him who acted as president. Irenaeus appears in this way. It is true that we are not positively assured of the existence of other bishoprics in Gaul till the middle of the third century, when Cyprian [1] called upon Pope Stephen to depose Marcianus, the Novatian Bishop of Arles. On the other hand, we know absolutely nothing of the Gallic Church from the time of Irenaeus to that of Cyprian.

There is no good reason for doubting that the 'churches' of which Irenaeus speaks, in Roman Germany, in Spain, in Celtic Gaul, in the East, in Egypt, and in Libya, and elsewhere,[2] were organized on the same lines and presided over by bishops.

Irenaeus appears to have been animated by a fervent zeal for evangelization. He was well furnished in respect of education, though he had never risen above the grammar school, and had not studied the 'art of words' under a rhetorician. He quotes Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, and knew something of Plato and other Greek philosophers. But he had taken the trouble to learn the Gallic vernacular, and preached and spoke in Celtic so habitually that in the preface to his treatise against heresies he expresses a modest fear that his Greek style may be found wanting in elegance. Latin would probably have served his turn in Lyons itself, which was strongly romanized, but the native idiom was common even in the old province, and in the rest of Gaul outside the cities was universal.[3] What degree of success he met with in his missionary enterprises we do not know, but a priest, Ferreolus, who was martyred at Besançon, is said to have been sent thither by Irenaeus. Down to the time of St. Martin, and even afterwards, heathenism was strong in the Celtic parts of Gaul.

After his mission to Eleutherus of Rome, Irenaeus, about 190, wrote one or more letters to Pope Victor, in which he protested against the action of that fiery prelate in excommunicating the Asiatic Quartodecimans. After this last

[1] *Ep.* 68. [2] i. 10. 2. [3] Mommsen, *Provinces*, i. 99.

effort in the cause of peace and charity the good man vanishes from the scene.

The great work of Irenaeus, the five books 'against all Heresies', was written in Gaul.[1] It was composed in Greek, but was translated almost immediately into Latin, and the version so completely superseded the original that except in the first book only scattered fragments of the Greek text survive. It was as pastor and guardian of the flock that he entered into controversy against the Gnostics. He actually knew good women who had been led astray by Marcus,[2] and this bitter experience drew him to investigate the theories of other Gnostic teachers whom he knew of only from books. But he felt that, though common sense and even ridicule could effect something, the best antidote was to be found in Scripture and in the exposition of the universal faith and practice of the Church. Thus, though his work has in great part a negative controversial bent, we may call Irenaeus the first systematic theologian. The next writers to whom we can apply this title are the Alexandrines, but there is a marked difference between him and them. Irenaeus makes his points against the Gnostics with great natural acuteness. He even presses philosophy into his service, but only in a limited and superficial way. This idea, he says, the Gnostics have borrowed from Thales, that other from Democritus or Plato, very much as Hippolytus did after him. But he found no positive value or help in heathen science; indeed, like all the apologists except Justin, he regarded it with suspicion and dislike. Hence he does not attempt to enforce the Creed by arguments drawn from cultivated reason, or to go to the root of the difficulties suggested by Gnosticism. He does not speculate on the relation of divine justice to divine goodness, or of freewill to grace, nor does he care to defend the morality of the Old Testament. Some things, he says, were hidden even from

[1] The title given by Irenaeus himself—see the preface to the last four of the five books—is, in the Latin version, *detectio et eversio falsae cognitionis*: this in the original Greek is ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως. Under this title it was known to Eusebius, *H. E.* v. 7. 1. The book was addressed to a bishop, not a Gallican bishop, most likely the Bishop of Rome.

[2] i. 13. 5.

the Son,[1] and there are many inscrutable mysteries which we must leave to God, such as the nature of matter and the mode of creation. For we know but in part; we live upon earth, and do not as yet sit by the throne of the Almighty. All that is necessary has been revealed; it is idle and irreligious to pry into those things which are above our powers.[2] Always he is dogmatic, scriptural, religious, making little use of allegorism, placing his main reliance upon tradition—that is to say, upon the Bible as interpreted by the Church.

He is the first systematic theologian also because he first made use of the whole New Testament, which he treats as an inspired and homogeneous *corpus*.[3] What he did was to weave together Paul, Hebrews, Peter, and John into a doctrinal harmony, taking his metaphysics mainly from John, and his practical system partly from Paul, but chiefly from Peter or Hebrews, or what we may call the disciplinary books generally. This type of thought is seen in all the earlier writers, and Irenaeus greatly strengthened it, made it, indeed, universal. The Gnostics were largely Pauline, though in a perverted way, and it was probably owing to this fact that the leading ideas of the great Apostle fell into almost complete oblivion.

Of the Church, Irenaeus says[4] that all who would have the Spirit must come to the Church. 'For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; the Spirit, moreover, is the truth.'

This is his main, and, as he justly thought it, irresistible argument against Gnosticism. The heretics boasted that they possessed a secret tradition handed down from certain Apostles. Irenaeus replied that all the Churches from East to West bear witness to a well-known and quite different

[1] Mark xiii. 32. [2] ii. 28. 6, 7.

[3] It is doubtful whether he knew or accepted Philemon (3 John or 2 Peter), but the omission of direct quotation may be accidental. 2 Peter was certainly known to the Church of Lyons; see their Letter, Eus. *H. E.* v. 1. 45; 2. 6. They appear also to have used the Apocalypse of Peter, which seems to have been quoted, ib. v. i. 49.

[4] iii. 24. 1.

tradition taught by all the Apostles and handed down the line of their successors, the priests and bishops, who have received the *charisma veritatis*, by virtue of their apostolical succession.[1] Sometimes he seems to speak, like Clement of Rome, of bishops and priests as equal in the authority of their teaching and equal in their apostolical commission. But he appeals with special emphasis to the bishops, and above all to the Bishop of the Church of Rome, founded by the most glorious Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. To this Church, he adds, the whole body of the faithful must resort 'on account of its superior antiquity' or 'of its excellent precedence'.[2]

Tradition, in the mind of Irenaeus, means the Creed, which was already taking fixed shape.[3] He regards it as drawn immediately from Scripture. Scripture he regards as absolutely inspired. The only rule of exegesis upon which he insists is that no one part of Scripture shall be made to contradict another. Thus he blames the perverse and scrappy use of the Bible by the Gnostics. They are like a man, who, having found a mosaic portrait of a king, executed by a skilful artist, breaks it up, and makes a bad picture of a dog or a fox out of the fragments.[4] In his own

[1] iv. 26. 2; cp. ἡ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας κηρυσσομένη ἀλήθεια, i. 9. 5; 'praeconium ecclesiae,' v. 20. 2; 'apostolica ecclesiae traditio,' iii. 3. 3. Sometimes we find simply *παράδοσις* or *traditio*.

[2] iii. 3. 2. The reading of the best manuscript is 'propter pontiorem principalitatem.' *Pontiorem* has been generally corrected to *Potentiorem*. Unfortunately the passage only exists in Latin, and we do not know the exact words used by Irenaeus. The word *principalitatem* probably represents *πρωτείαν*, but this may mean either 'antiquity' or 'precedence'; see for the latter sense iv. 38. 3, where we have both original and version. Here the Greek runs *καὶ οὕτως πρωτεύει μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν ὁ θεός, ὁ καὶ μόνος ἀγένητος, καὶ πρῶτος πάντων καὶ τοῦ εἶναι τοῖς πᾶσι παραίτιος. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ πάντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μένει τῷ Θεῷ*: which is translated 'Et sic principalitatem quidem habebit in omnibus deus, quoniam et solus infectus et prior omnium et omnibus ut sint ipse est caussa; reliqua vero omnia in subiectione sunt Dei' (in Harvey's edition the reference is iv. 63. 2). In Tertullian *principalitas* means 'priority' as opposed to *posteritas* = 'posteriority'; *de Praescr. Haer.* 31. The question is not of great importance. It is clear that Irenaeus regards the Church of Rome as entitled to a certain precedence, and its bishop as an example and pattern of orthodoxy. Of jurisdiction there is yet no trace, and Irenaeus himself opposed Victor upon the question of the excommunication of the Quartodecimans.

[3] See the *Apology* of Aristides, *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. I. i. pp. 13, 23.

[4] i. 8. 1.

interpretation he follows, upon the whole, the literal sense with but slight admixture of allegorism.

It has been seen that Irenaeus regards the visible Church as the one and only fountain of grace. Hence all heretics, that is to say all Gnostics, are manifestly condemned. Even schismatics, tolerant and kindly as he was, he regards with great severity. 'They rend the great and glorious Body of Christ for mere trifles, because they do not love God, and think more of their own profit than of the unity of the Church. Whatever correction they may effect is not to be compared with the mischief of schism.'[1] He is thinking of the Montanists. Their zeal for the Spirit is a correction, but they might have found it within the Church, which still possessed the gift of prophecy, and they ought to have found it there without breaking the tie of brotherly communion and disregarding the will of God.

Like all previous writers, he regards the Gospel as a Law, or body of precepts, which includes all the ordinances and institutions of the Church. It is a law of freedom, inasmuch as it sets us at liberty from the Jewish observances; nevertheless it is imposed upon the Christian by authority. Faith is not the turning of the heart to God, nor the presence of Christ in the heart, but the assent to the *Regula Fidei*, partly moral conviction, partly intellectual, in both respects larger and more difficult than the Old Covenant. The moral element is even more important than the intellectual, and Irenaeus speaks of man as justified by the natural precepts of the Law,[2] that is to say, by the eternal rules of morality as laid down in the Decalogue. On the other hand, he insists that the Spirit, since His descent upon the Son of Man, dwells in men as God's creatures, renovating them into newness of life.[3] But upon the whole we may say that he regards good works not as simply fruits and necessary signs of faith, as St. Paul does, but as a *causa meritoria* of salvation. The Freedom of the Will he maintains with a boldness which may appear extravagant. But down to the time of the Pelagian controversy similar language was current, and it must be remembered that the Gnostics, by

[1] iv. 33. 7. [2] iv. 13. 1. [3] iii. 17. 1.

their division of mankind into three natural classes, practically denied human responsibility. But here, again, we may discern how little real influence St. Paul exercised at the time when the Church was moulding her system.

Irenaeus's view of the Law of Moses is perhaps the most remarkable feature in his general position. He divides it sharply into two branches of very unequal value, the Moral and the Ceremonial. The Moral Law, contained in the Decalogue, states those natural and eternal truths which have at all times been the ground of salvation, and are written upon the consciences of all men, are, in fact, that image of God in which man was created.[1] They were graven on the first tables delivered to Moses on Sinai, and broken by him when, on descending from the mountain, he found his people worshipping the calf. Upon this, God, that is to say Christ, gave the Hebrews a second Law, suitable to their low moral state, a law of slavery ruling them with a yoke. Some of the precepts were actually added by Moses himself on account of the hardness of men's hearts, for instance the permission of divorce; and similarly, Irenaeus goes on to say, even in the New Testament the Apostles made concessions to human frailty, as St. Paul does when he treats of the marriage of virgins.[2] We may observe here how closely Irenaeus approximates on the one hand to the Gnostic Ptolemy, on the other to the Montanists. The Levitical system is partly penal, as, for instance, in respect to the restrictions upon food, partly typical as in respect to sacrifice; but sacrifice is in itself of no value,[3] and the same is true of all ceremonial. We may trace here the influence of certain phrases used by St. Paul and of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we may usefully refer also to the Epistle of Barnabas, where the Law is even more severely described.

But the truly important points to notice here are two. The first is the high value attached by Irenaeus to the eternal moral law, which has always been the same and always capable of saving mankind through the never-failing help of Christ. Legal he was in a sense, but he knows well

[1] iv. 15. 1, 2. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12, 25. [3] iv. 17.

how to distinguish the permanent and essential obligations from the transient and secondary. Even under the Christian dispensation differences of ritual and ceremonial, such as that about the powers of the clergy, or about the rules of fasting, which were maintained by the Montanists, or that about the date of Easter, which caused such bitterness in the Quartodeciman dispute, seemed to this wise man trivial. The second is the curious way in which, though no critic, he holds out a friendly hand to modern criticism. Not in our own days for the first time has the Levitical system been regarded as a falling away from an older and more perfect declaration of the laws of God.

The theology of Irenaeus is that of the Apostles' Creed, of which every article, including the Descent into Hell, is to be found in his writings. It is that also of the Nicene Creed, for it includes the *Homoousion*, though the actual term is not employed. Indeed he may be fairly cited as a witness against Arius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches.

Two points call for special notice. Irenaeus is careful to express the divine Immanence in such a way as not to impair the divine Transcendence. Thus he says, following St. Paul, that God contains all and is contained by none. We ought to say not that God is in all, but that all is in God, as the effect is in the cause. There is a world of difference between these two phrases; the first is Pantheism.[1] Again, Irenaeus is not troubled by the ensnaring words Infinite or Absolute. Both these words are, in fact, irrelevant nonsense. Spirit, which has nothing to do with space, can in no sense be finite, while matter, which is immersed in space, can in no case be infinite. Absolute, again, that is to say unrelated, cannot be an epithet of God, who is Creator, Father, King, and Redeemer. Only in one sense can this dangerous word be applied to Him. God 'wants nothing'—that is to say, nothing can increase or impair His blessedness. Sacrifice is good, not for Him, but for ourselves.[2] Irenaeus is thinking here mainly of the Psalms.[3] But his

[1] iv. 19. [2] iv. 18. 3.
[3] Esp. Pss. xl, l, li, in the English Bible.

favourite conception of God is that of Perfection, which is complete, balanced, personal, and religious. Perfection is, strictly speaking, incomprehensible to those who are not perfect. Yet it speaks to all men in varying degrees, and it opens a vista of unending progress, both moral and intellectual, through the Son, who is 'the measure of the immeasurable Father',[1] inasmuch as in the Son is the full perfection of God made visible. For He assumed our flesh, really and truly, because we could not have borne the dazzling revelation of His glory.[2]

Objection might well be taken to this last passage if it stood alone and represented the whole thought of Irenaeus. Here, we might say, he attributes a merely negative value to the Humanity. There was a Veil on the face of Christ as there was upon that of Moses, an idea which is certainly not Pauline.[3] But Irenaeus, as we shall see, presents the Incarnation in other ways also. It added vastly to the power with which the divine goodness appeals to man, and it forms the foundation of the favourite thought of Irenaeus, the Recapitulation of mankind in Christ.

He has no technical word for Persons, but there can be no doubt that he has the idea. Nor does he mention Sabellianism, though it is not impossible that this mode of thought, which abolished the personal distinction, already existed in certain quarters. Again, he has no word for Trinity, though *Trias* is used in his own time by Theophilus of Antioch. But here, again, Irenaeus has the thing if not the phrase. The three Hebrew spies, whom Rahab entertained and concealed, typified Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,[4] and the same three are understood wherever the name of Christ is used.[5] All three again co-operate in Creation; the Father plans and commands, the Son executes, the Spirit fosters and gives increase.[6] So also they are united in the whole work of salvation.[7] It was to Son and Spirit that the Father spoke, saying, 'Let us make man.'[8] Angels who were themselves creatures could not, as some Gnostics held, be the actual agents of Creation. Only God can

[1] iv. 4. 2. [2] iv. 38. 1. [3] 2 Cor. iii. 13 sqq. [4] iv. 20. 12.
[5] iii. 18. 3. [6] iv. 38. 3, 4. [7] Ib. [8] v. 1. 3.

create. It is in the light of these utterances that we must interpret the fact that Irenaeus does not use the title 'God' of the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus is strictly scriptural, and most unwilling to depart at any point from the authority of the Bible. What he teaches is what he calls the Apostolic tradition. It is no doubt an interpretation of Scripture, but it was the interpretation held by the whole Church. As to this the authority of Irenaeus must be rated very high, for he was well acquainted with the Church of Rome and with the Churches of Asia, and he certainly knew what was preached in Gaul. We may say of him with confidence that he belongs to the great central party of the Church. We may say, also, that what he gives us is not his own. He never speculates; for instance, much as he has to say about the three divine Persons, and though he affirms, in fact, that they are One, he nowhere attempts to explain how they are One. Indeed, the main lesson which he had learnt from Gnosticism was a profound distrust of philosophy. 'Keep order,' he says, 'in thy knowledge. . . . For thy Creator cannot be defined; do not, therefore, as if thou hadst wholly measured Him, and travelled through the whole of His constitution, and studied the whole of His depth and height and length, seek another Father above Him.'[1] He held that we know the Father in the Son, but also that in God's nature there are abysses which we cannot fathom till we see Him face to face. There are questions which we must not ask; they cannot be answered, and therefore it is folly to ask them.

Always Irenaeus regards theology from a religious and practical point of view. What he preaches is the God of the conscience and of the heart. Right faith is a great thing, but only as the mother of right conduct. It is of vast importance to know the nature of Christ, but the supreme necessity is that Christ and the Holy Spirit should do their appointed work in the soul. The work is to restore to man the likeness of God which was lost at the Fall. The image of God—reason and the capacity for all goodness—was

[1] ii. 25. 4.

never lost; it was imprinted once for all upon the nature of man. But the likeness, conformity of will to God, this was forfeited by Adam, and can only be regained through the Gospel and in the Church.[1]

His doctrine of the Fall is extremely remarkable, both for its merits and its defects. He begins by an elaborate double comparison. Adam is a type of Christ, who is the Second Adam. So also Eve is a counterpart of the Virgin Mary,[2] for the first mother was a virgin at the time of the Fall; indeed, the forbidden fruit signifies in an allegory the premature union of Adam and Eve, for they were not as yet adolescent, and the time fixed by God for their nuptials had not yet arrived. The sin of Eve was less than that of Adam, hence she was not so heavily punished as her husband, though neither was cursed.[3] Irenaeus contrasts the obedience of Christ with the disobedience of Adam, and the obedience of Mary with the disobedience of Eve, adding that Mary is the 'advocate of Eve', and that 'as the human race is condemned to death through a virgin, so it is saved through a virgin.'[4]

Adam was not created perfect either in age or in intelligence.[5] He bore the image of God imprinted upon his nature, and this he could not lose. The likeness also was given to him, but this he lost too easily through his own

[1] At first, by the operation of the Spirit, who is 'the pledge of immortality, the confirmation of our faith, the ladder whereby we ascend to God' (iii. 24. 1), Irenaeus had been taught by the Elders, who were disciples of the Apostles, that through the Spirit man rises up to the Son, and through the Son to the Father (v. 36. 2), and distinguishes thus three mansions of the faithful, Heaven, Paradise, and the City of God. 'For God prepares for each a fitting habitation according as he is worthy or shall be.' In this view we find an inference from the parables of the Pound, the Talents, the Sower and the Seed, and from the Many Mansions of St. John.

[2] iii. 22. 3, 4.

[3] iii. 23. 4.

[4] v. 19. 1. We have seen what extravagant language was used by the Gnostics in the second century of the Blessed Virgin. Here Irenaeus goes even beyond them, making the mother almost co-redemptress with her Son. Yet he admits that the obedience of Mary at Cana was not flawless (iii. 16. 7), agreeing in this with all the older doctors (see note in Harvey on this passage; he numbers it iii. 17. 7. The comparison between Adam and Christ is taken from St. Paul. It is impossible to say what is the source of that between Mary and Eve, but it is certainly not Scriptural).

[5] iv. 38. i.

fault,[1] because it was not yet made visible in the Incarnate Word. Virtue was known as a divine law, but could not be loved except in the Person of Christ; it could attain its full charm and power only through the Cross, which draws men with a force before unknown. Irenaeus connects with these thoughts that of Original Sin. 'In the first Adam we offended because we did not keep God's command, but in the Second Adam we were reconciled, having been made obedient unto death.'[2] We all inherit the maimed nature of our progenitor; Adam had lost the likeness, and it could be restored only by Christ.

Irenaeus is the first of post-apostolic Fathers to reiterate this doctrine of St. Paul's. He expresses it, we may say, rather as inherited loss than as inherited guilt, and he is far from pressing it to the same extreme as St. Augustine.

The particular sin of Adam we have already seen; it was that he would not wait the time appointed by God for his marriage with Eve. He wanted to be like God in independence at a time when he had not yet attained full possession of his reason.[3] We may put it thus, that he was determined to do what he liked before he liked what he ought, to be his own master when he could be nothing but a slave guiding a slave. Irenaeus would define sin as refusal to obey our natural and proper Lord. Perhaps no better definition can be given.

The Fall did not strike Irenaeus as an unmixed calamity. Man created immature can attain to perfection only by completing his experience and 'passing through all things'.[4] Temptation alone can teach him the desirability of virtue, the heartfelt sense of the difference between good and evil, and of his own weakness, till at last he appropriates the lesson of the Resurrection, sees the full horror of the dangers from which he has been freed, is filled with gratitude to God, and receives from God the gift of incorruption, that he may be able to love Him more. Thus the Fall results in 'greater glory' than Adam's; it is not a mere restoration, but by leading finally to union with the Son of Man, who is also the Word of God, accustoms man to perceive God

[1] v. 16. 2. [2] v. 16. 3. [3] iv. 38. 4. [4] iii. 20. 2.

and enables God to dwell in man, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But how is man to 'pass through all things' with safety? Only by union with Christ, who in each successive age of the world gives him that knowledge and help which he needs at the time. The Gospel is no new thing, but the completion of a long chain of revelations of the Saviour, the last and the best stage in the education of the world. For this final lesson Christ must necessarily be both God and Man, perfect in power, perfect in sympathy. He must be Very God, absolutely One with the Father, containing in Himself the whole of the Father, and existing in complete harmony with the will of the Father, so that there can be no possible difference of purpose between the Two. But also He must be Very Man. 'For in former times it was indeed said that man was made in the image of God, but it was not manifested. For the Word was still invisible in whose image man had been made. Therefore also man easily lost the likeness. But when the Word became Flesh He confirmed both. For He displayed the image in very truth, Himself becoming that which was His image, and He established securely the likeness, making man like the invisible Father through the visible Son.'[1] Christ must be Man, really and truly Man, not merely in appearance, as the Gnostics believed.[2] 'We could not have learned without seeing our Master and hearing His voice with our ears, that, being imitators of His works and doers of His words, we might have communion with Him, receiving our increase from the Perfect One and Him who is before all Creation.'[3] Here we reach what we may call the favourite and characteristic thought of Irenaeus, the Recapitulation of Man in Christ. The word is borrowed from St. Paul;[4] it is used by Irenaeus so as to bring into one the Word of St. John with the High Priest of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Son of Man of the Synoptical Gospels.

Christ as Agent of the Creation made man in His own divine image and likeness. Hence He is the ideal man, the sealed pattern, we may say, of all humanity, containing in

[1] v. 16. 2. [2] iv. 33. 5. [3] v. 1. 1. [4] Eph. i. 10.

Himself all that man is, or ought to be, or may be. To this He adds, on the one hand, all that God is, which is therefore capable of being added to humanity, in Him, and by adoption or grace, and, on the other hand, all that belongs to man, not as a spirit but as embodied. Thus He recapitulates us; is, we may say, our plenary Representative, so that all He is or did or suffered belongs to all those who accept Him for their Lord in a very real and true sense. Thus again He is in perfect sympathy with us. He passed through all our experiences; a child with children, a man with men, an elder with elders.[1]

Without faith in this Christ incarnate and crucified no man can be saved.[2] He paid our debts upon the Cross. As man's fall was occasioned by a Tree, so was his salvation effected by a Tree, and the extension of our Lord's arms upon the Cross signified in a figure that He would embrace both Jews and Gentiles, and draw them to the One Head.[3]

He paid our debts, and could do so because He was our Representative. The idea has been harshly criticized in modern times, but without reason. If it meant that an impenitent thief is let off without punishment, and suffered to go back to his stealing, on the intercession of some good-natured but not wise person, this no doubt would be immoral. But Irenaeus is speaking of men united by faith to their sinless Advocate and Redeemer, and striving to be like Him in all things. And the transfer of merit, far from being strange, is one of the commonest facts of moral experience. All men are made better by the innocent suffering of mothers, teachers, pastors, governors. If there is any meaning in the word Forgiveness, if the thing itself exists, it must always imply a 'letting off'. If the pardon is wise, and we are speaking of the pardon of God, it will make men better.

[1] Irenaeus had been told by disciples of St. John that at the time of the Crucifixion Christ was nearly fifty years old (ii. 22. 5). This idea was an inference from the words of the Jews recorded in St. John's Gospel, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old' (John viii. 57). We may call it an exaggerated gloss upon the phrase of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'Who was in all points tempted like as we are.'

[2] iv. 2. 7.

[3] v. 17. 3, 4.

It must be admitted that in the teaching of Irenaeus there are archaic defects. He held that by transgression men had become not merely slaves, but lawful slaves, of the devil. It was natural, in an age when slaves were bought and sold, when slavery was regarded as a natural institution, and the worst of masters had a right to his chattel, that he should think that even Satan's captives could not be set free without observance of the usual forms. Even the devil must have his due. Even the unjust tyrant of man must not be treated with injustice; he must be persuaded to let his captives go, or he must be overcome in fair combat, or he must receive the price which he demands.

Thus Irenaeus sometimes regards the Atonement as a judicial duel in the lists. The Second Adam is the stronger man who challenges and overcomes the strong man, binding him, spoiling his goods, and setting his captives free. He is thinking here of Matthew xii. 29. Adam fell through disobedience; Christ, by His perfect obedience, resisted and vanquished all the wiles of the evil spirit, broke his power, and opened the doors of his prison-house.

Elsewhere he regards the slaves of Satan as bought from their master with a price. 'With His own Blood the Lord redeemed us, and gave His own Soul for our souls, His own Flesh for our flesh.' This ransom was paid to Satan, and by him willingly received, by 'persuasion'.[1]

We should notice that this peculiar shape of the idea of Ransom (it endured down to the time of St. Anselm) is moulded by opposition to Gnosticism, which represented God as breaking unjustly into a world which He had not created and which did not belong to Him.[2] Further, the Gnostics asserted that God was good, but not just. Irenaeus was deeply interested in maintaining that He was both. But it is not surprising that the profound and difficult question, what is the Divine Justice, which had perplexed the Psalmist and the author of the Book of Job, and was now for the first time raised in the Gentile Church, was not very adequately handled by the first Christian theologian.

Again, it must be said that the idea of Ransom is scrip-

[1] v. 1. 1. [2] v. 2. 1.

tural, intelligible, and true. But this Ransom is spiritual, and to whom is a spiritual Ransom paid? Let us take a nearly analogous case. The Christian slaves of the Algerines were ransomed by the blood of Lord Exmouth's sailors. But who received this price? Was it the Dey whose tyranny exacted it? Was it the King of England who expected from his seamen obedience unto death? Or was it God who inspired the king with wisdom to send the fleet, and the fleet with courage to obey? Undoubtedly a ransom was paid, and undoubtedly it was effectual, not only in a material but even in a moral sense. For the captives would be grateful for their release, and in some, at any rate, gratitude would lead to amendment of life. In fine, we may think that the way in which Irenaeus puts the case, though too limited, is by no means absurd.

Nor must we fail to observe that he uses other expressions in the same connexion, that by His Sacrifice Christ perfects men,[1] bestows upon man eternal life, carries out the eternal purpose of God, takes back into Himself His old creation,[2] reconciles man to God.[3] Lipsius complains that the two main thoughts of Irenaeus, redemption through the obedience of Christ and redemption specially through His Death upon the Cross, are placed in no connexion.[4] We may say, perhaps, that the main point in the eyes of Irenaeus is that man was not redeemed by his own obedience, and cannot be.[5] Or again, that the connexion is not worked out in Scripture itself. Or again, that those modern writers who have laboured to elucidate the connexion have too often ended by denying any particular significance to the Death of Christ.

The Church, the Visible Body of Christ, is, in the view of Irenaeus, as we said above, the dispenser of all grace, especially of the Two Sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist.

Of the rite of Baptism he gives hardly any details; for these we must turn to Justin, Tertullian, or Clement of

[1] iii. 22. 4; v. 1. 3. [2] iv. 33. 4. [3] v. 14. 3.
[4] See his article on Irenaeus, *D. C. B.* p. 278.
[5] v. 21. 3.

Alexandria. It is typified by the ark of Noah,[1] confers forgiveness and regeneration,[2] and water is the necessary vehicle of the grace.[3] But Irenaeus does not give the exact form of words; no doubt it was the same that we still employ.[4] Baptism conveys to us the merits of the Death of Christ, and it is a terrible thing to despise it and go on in our lusts. For Christ will not die a second time. 'Therefore,' one of the Elders had said to Irenaeus, 'we ought to fear, lest if we do what displeases God after our confession of Christ, we should find no other forgiveness of sins, but should be excluded from His Kingdom.[5] This stern doctrine was held by some members of the Church of Rome in the time of Hermas; it was held by the Montanists in the time of Irenaeus, and afterwards by the Novatians. Observe that the Elder only asserted that we ought to fear lest it should be true. Further, the actual belief of Irenaeus must surely have been the same as that of his own Church, and we know from their Letter that the Lyonnese martyrs held that even apostasy might be purged by repentance.

In the Eucharist we offer to God the first-fruits of His creatures,[6] which is acceptable when it is combined with the oblations of ourselves 'in a pure mind, in faith without hypocrisy, in firm hope, in fervent love'. Thus our sacrifice becomes the 'pure oblation' spoken of by the prophet Malachi[7] which the Church alone offers to the Creator.[8]

Because the Bread and Wine are first-fruits of the earth, the Eucharist is capable of being employed as a strong argument against the Gnostics. 'For how can they prove that that Bread over which thanks have been said is the body of their Lord, and that Cup His Blood, if they do not allow that He is Son of the Creator, that is to say His Word, by whom trees bear fruit, and fountains flow, and earth gives first the blade, then the ear, then the full wheat in the ear?'[9]

The Bread and Mixed Cup remain after consecration

[1] iv. 36. 4. [2] i. 21. 1. [3] i. 21. 4.
[4] See below, p. 271. [5] iv. 27. 2; cp. Heb. x. 26–9.
[6] iv. 17. 5. [7] Ib. [8] iv. 18. 4. [9] Ib.

what they are by nature, and continue to perform their appointed function of nourishing the human body.[1]

Nevertheless the Bread and Wine become by consecration in some sense the Body and Blood of our Lord. 'For we offer to God what is His own, fitly proclaiming a communion and a oneness, and confessing a resurrection of flesh and spirit.' For as bread which is of earth, receiving the evocation (ἔκκλησιν) of God, is no longer common bread but eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly, so also we confess that our bodies partaking of the Eucharist are no longer corruptible because they have the hope of the resurrection to eternity.'[2] Again, 'the mixed cup and the creaturely bread receive the word of God, and the Eucharist becomes a Body of Christ.'[3]

It may be observed that Irenaeus could not have employed a vaguer phrase than 'two things'. The Greek word here used (πρᾶγμα) has a wide range of applications. It might signify as much as substantial presence; it might mean no more than blessing. What then is the 'heavenly thing' here in question? Irenaeus calls it sometimes 'thanks',[4] sometimes 'the evocation of God',[5] sometimes 'the Word of God'.[6] The last phrase is best explained as meaning 'a prayer instituted by God'; thus Justin says that as Christ became incarnate by 'a word of God' so the Eucharist becomes Flesh and Blood of Jesus 'when thanks have been given over it by a word of prayer which was delivered by Him.'[7]

As to the virtue of the Sacrament, Irenaeus regards the Eucharist as a pledge of unity among Christians; thus he tells us that Anicetus allowed Polycarp to celebrate in the Church of Rome, as a sign that, though they were at

[1] v. 2. 2. [2] iv. 18. 5.

[3] v. 2. 3. The passage in iv. 18. 4, where Irenaeus says of the Jews 'non enim receperunt verbum quod (or *per quod*) offertur deo' (some MSS. omit *deo*), is uncertain both in text and meaning. See notes in Stieren; Gore, *The Body of Christ*, p. 300; Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, does not quote the words.

[4] iv. 18. 4. [5] iv. 18. 5. [6] v. 2. 3.

[7] *Apol.* i. 66. The prayer may have been the Lord's Prayer, but this, though it was the opinion of Gregory the Great, is doubted. See Greg. *Epp.* ix. 12; Wordsworth, *Holy Communion*, p. 105; Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, p. 176; Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, p. 159.

variance with respect to the date of Easter, they were at one in all the essential points of the faith.[1] In it we offer to God the first-fruits of His creatures with a grateful and pure heart, and are thus brought into closer communion with God as Creator and as Redeemer. But the point upon which he most frequently and emphatically dwells is that in the Eucharist the believer receives the proof of, and the capacity for, the Resurrection of the Body, the gift of incorruption.[2] He is perhaps referring to Ignatius,[3] but the reason why he insists upon this point so earnestly is to be found in the fact that the Gnostics admitted only a spiritual resurrection. The words spoken by Christ in St. John's Gospel are quite sufficient for Irenaeus. But, if we ask him how the Eucharist can convey this boon, he seems to answer in a passage quoted above[4] that, by offering to God the first-fruits of earth, we confess that the material world was made by the spiritual God, and that therefore there is 'a communion and oneness' between God and our bodies as well as our souls, and that this is brought into operation by the consecrated bread.[5]

Irenaeus can hardly be said to have given us a theory of the Eucharist. He does not even give a complete account of the teaching of Scripture, does not in particular bring the Sacrament into any connexion with the Sacrifice of Christ. But the most important reflection is, that in spite of these defects, as modern theologians account them, he is the most eminent, systematic, and representative teacher of his age, and that the general body of the Church had certainly not passed beyond him.

It has been necessary several times to mention the Elders whom Irenaeus repeatedly cites with great respect, as disciples of the Apostles or as disciples of the disciples of the

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 17.

[2] iv. 18. 5; v. 2. 2.

[3] *Φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*, Eph. xx. 2; cp. John vi. 50 sqq.

[4] iv. 18. 4 sqq.

[5] See Batiffol, p. 161. Irenaeus is speaking of the resurrection of life, which is distinct from the resurrection of judgement (v. 13. 1), where he quotes John v. 29. Certainly he believed in the bodily resurrection of the wicked (see ii. 28. 7), but he does not appear to see anything that needs explanation in this case.

Apostles. He seldom uses names, but they appear to have been the luminaries of the Asiatic Johannean school from the reign of Trajan. Among them we may reckon his own predecessors, Pothinus, Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius.[1] Irenaeus refers sometimes to their books, sometimes to their conversations or oral lectures.

He learned from them many things, especially Chiliasm, the doctrine of the First and Second Resurrection, and of the millennial reign of Christ upon earth, a doctrine based upon the Apocalypse, which was the general belief of the Church down to the time of the Alexandrines. Irenaeus found it expressed by Papias in a highly sensuous shape.[2] Irenaeus held firmly the doctrine, though he was too spiritual to paint the Marriage Feast in terms of earthly joy.

But the most interesting point is his view of the four Gospels and their origin. It was to him inconceivable that they should be more or fewer than four. They are the four columns on which the Church rests: there are four Cherubim, four quarters of the world, and so it is ordained that there should be four biographies of Christ.[3] He gives us also an account of the way in which Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John composed the Gospels which bear their names.[4] It is evident that Irenaeus possessed our four Gospels and regarded them alone as canonical, but it is evident also that he thought them to be the original compositions of the authors whose names are attached to them, not compiled from previous documents or from one another.

Probably here also Irenaeus is following the authority of Papias, who derived from John the Elder the account which he gave of the origin of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.[5] When Papias says that Matthew composed the Oracles in Hebrew he means that he was in the fullest sense the author of the First Gospel, and that he wrote it in his native tongue. Neither statement would now be admitted.

[1] See the references collected in Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchristl. Litt.* i. 64; Harvey, i, p. 3; Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*: see Index for special references.

[2] v. 33. 3. The passage is probably from Papias, who is named in the next section.

[3] iii. 11. 8. [4] iii. 1. 1. [5] Eus. *H. E.* iii. 39. 15.

It would in fact appear that no ancient writer knew anything about the sacred books beyond what lies upon the surface. We may infer with probability that the process by which the Synoptical Gospels took shape lay so far back in the past that it had quite faded from memory; in other words, that the first three Gospels assumed their present shape much earlier than is often supposed.

CHAPTER XVIII

COMMODUS

Of the six sons of Marcus one only survived his father. This was Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Antoninus, who had been created Emperor in 176 at the age of fifteen and was sole ruler from 180 to 192. Titus and Domitian also had succeeded their natural father Vespasian, but Commodus alone enjoyed the further distinction of having been born in the purple. By adoption or blood he reckoned five Emperors from Nerva among his ancestors.

His pedigree exhibits a remarkable instance of that physical exhaustion which had descended upon the Roman nobility, and indeed upon the older and more civilized races. Childlessness was very common, infant mortality was enormous, and life, at any rate in Rome itself, was very short. The causes of this decline are to be looked for not in war nor in the natural occasional calamities of pestilence and famine, which favour the survival of the fittest, nor in insanitary conditions, for the laws of hygiene were better understood among the ancients than they ever were again until the other day, but in an increasing desire for comfort combined with a general decrease in material prosperity, and in an exceedingly low regard for sexual morality. Infanticide was not a crime; slaves, probably quite a half of the population, were not allowed to marry, and had no protection whatever against the lusts of their owners; divorce was perfectly easy, and the great nobles very commonly kept harems. High and low, nobles and slaves, had abjured the hope of a vigorous posterity. Augustus discerned the evil and endeavoured to provide a remedy, but his marriage laws were against the set of the times and produced no effect.

It is in this way also that we must explain the intellectual sterility of the second and third centuries.

Commodus was probably not devoid of natural amiability and had been well educated. He was not without religious instincts, though even here he showed his instability of character, for, while devoted to the foreign cults of Isis and Mithra, he caused himself to be portrayed on his coins as the Roman Hercules. But he was sensual, vulgar, cruel, prodigal, vain and weak, and all this in the superlative degree.

There is no profit in recounting the details of his miserable reign; they may be read in Gibbon or in Schiller. But there are some points which immediately concern our present object.

His first and best minister was Perennis, a capable officer, whom Commodus appointed praetorian prefect at the beginning of his reign and put to death on a suspicion of conspiracy in 185.

Again, among his concubines—Roman gossips said that he kept three hundred of these half-wives—was one Marcia. She had been concubine of Quadratus, one of the many victims of the Emperor's cruelty.[1] After the divorce of his wife Bruttia Crispina, Commodus took Marcia into his own harem and made her favourite of all his numerous sultanas. He caused her to be painted in the garb of an Amazon, changed the name of the month December to Amazonius in her honour and fought as a gladiator in the Roman amphitheatre in the costume appropriate to these mythical female warriors, as a knight in the days of chivalry would ride into the lists with his lady's colours bound to his helmet. She exercised great influence over her weak lord, and used it so far as we know for good. It was she who persuaded him to surrender his servile and rapacious minister Cleander to the vengeance of the people.[2] At the last, when she found that the tyrant had marked her also down for slaughter, she joined the conspiracy of Aemilius Laetus. On New Year's Eve, 192, she caused poison to be administered to Commodus, and when the drug failed, an athlete, Narcissus, was sent in to strangle him in his bath. After this tragedy Marcia

[1] Dion Cass. *Commodus*, 4. [2] D. C. 13.

married Eclectus, chief of the imperial chamberlains, one of the assassins.

Yet this unhappy woman was a Christian, and a friend of Victor, the then Pope. We shall see a little later that she did what good was in her power. For the rest we may discern in her story the utter helplessness of a beautiful woman in Rome under such an Emperor as Commodus.

Commodus was merely a drunken gladiator seated upon a throne. Yet this worthless Emperor was merciful to the Christian people. There was little persecution in his reign, and none of the lawless tumultuary kind, of which we have seen so many instances. Blood was shed, but in decent orderly fashion, and mainly at the beginning of the reign before the evil spirit of intolerance fostered by Marcus had subsided. Indeed persecution was rapidly becoming a more dangerous task. Numbers of the Roman nobles were joining the Church with their whole retinues.[1] Christianity was strong in the palace itself. Marcia we have already seen, and we know also of Carpophorus, a high officer in the imperial household. Montanism had awakened a fierce spirit of resistance to oppression, showing itself in a passionate craving for martyrdom, and the provincial governors were taking alarm. When Arrius Antoninus, the proconsul of Asia,[2] was threatening to draw the sword in one of his towns all the Christians in the place besieged his tribunal and offered themselves to the executioner. He put a few of them to death and drove away the rest, saying,

[1] Eus. v. 21.

[2] This was probably C. Arrius Antoninus. He had been a friend and apparently a pupil of Fronto, who addresses him as 'mi domine fili carissime' (Naber, p. 192). He was regarded as an excellent governor. Fronto says to him (Naber, p. 195) 'Raro umquam tot simul capita de caelo tacta sunt quot tu condemnasti,' but he is referring to a particular decision as to the qualifications of decurions, which though it touched only one man would indirectly affect a great number of others. Arrius Antoninus was put to death on a false charge of misconduct in his proconsulate, and this judicial murder, according to Lampridius (*Vita Commodi*, 7), caused the downfall and death of Cleander. Cleander's death is placed in 189 (Schiller, i, p. 664), and the proconsulate of Arrius Antoninus must have ended not long before this date. There had been, however, several proconsuls of Asia of the same name. See Lightfoot, *Ign.* i, p. 523.

'Wretches, if you must die, there are precipices and halters.'[1]

This incident may probably have occurred about 187. Nearly at the same time a governor of Cappadocia (the name is not quite certain), enraged by the conversion of his wife, treated the Christians with great cruelty. Shortly afterwards he was attacked by a horrible disease. 'Upon this,' says Tertullian,[2] 'he confessed his wrongdoing in that by torture he had compelled many to abandon their religion, and died almost a Christian.' Family divisions occasioned by the new faith were a fruitful cause of persecution. Nor is there anything at all incredible about the close of the tale. The Christian wife would certainly point the moral, and in that superstitious age the sick man might very well believe that the God of the Christians, though Caesar had not acknowledged Him, was yet able to hurt.

A few months after the death of Marcus there were two trials for Christianity in Africa, both conducted by the proconsul Vigellius Saturninus, at Madaura and at Scillium. At the former place, which was the birthplace of Appuleius, and is known to us as the town where St. Augustine received his grammar-school education, the victims, four in number, bore Punic names, Namphamo, Miggin, Lucitas, and Samae, and were probably poor uneducated folk. We owe our knowledge of them to one Maximus of Madaura, a heathen grammarian of the fifth century, who regards their uncouth names as sufficient proof of their insignificance.[3]

As regards the Scillitan Martyrs, we possess now, through a happy discovery of the Dean of Westminster, the original dated Latin Acts, a most interesting document, which appears to be an actual transcript of the court record,[4] very

[1] Tert. *ad Scap.* 5. [2] *Ad Scap.* 3.

[3] Aug. *Epp.* xvi, xvii; *Opp.* ii, p. 15 sq. See Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 506. The date of these martyrdoms is built upon inference. Maximus calls Namphamo the *archimartyr* of Africa, a term which must mean the *first* martyr, for St. Cyprian was certainly the *chief*. Now Tertullian, *ad Scap.* 3, assures us that Vigellius Saturninus was the first to shed Christian blood in Africa. Maximus does not say that all four suffered at the same time. It is possible that they did, but our information is too scanty to afford certainty. The day again is not certain, but it may have been July 4.

[4] *Texts and Studies*, vol. i. No. 2.

possibly purchased from the official scribe by some brother who was present at the trial. The date is July 17, 180; the consuls for the year were Praesens and Condianus[1] and the proconsul was Saturninus. Of the twelve victims ten bear Latin names, six were women. The form of trial was brief and strictly legal, resembling that which was followed in the court of the city prefect. Few questions were asked, and none but the shortest and plainest answers allowed. The prisoners were called upon to swear by the Genius of Caesar; on their refusal a delay of thirty days for reconsideration was offered; when this was declined sentence was pronounced and execution immediately followed. When the martyrs heard their doom they replied, 'Deo gratias,' a phrase which seems to have been inculcated for use on such occasions by the African Church; it was afterwards used in the same way by St. Cyprian. There is no mention of any *delator*, but the name of the informer would not appear on any record of the trial. There was no torture, and death was inflicted by the sword. Tertullian says that this was the law, and complains bitterly that certain African governors had caused Christians to be burnt alive. Many Christians had been burnt or crucified or thrown to the beasts, but under the Antonines decapitation by axe or sword appears to have been the legal penalty, as we have seen in the case of Justin Martyr. In other words, Christians were to be treated as state offenders, not as common rogues. But considerable latitude was allowed to the provincial governors and a savage judge could do pretty much what he liked.[2]

Another case involved in much obscurity is that of Apollonius, who was put to death in Rome between 180 and 185. Eusebius in his *History*[3] gives us a condensed

[1] The MSS. have Claudianus : a mere error.

[2] See *Digest*, 48. 19, *de poenis*. In section 8 Ulpian says that no one ought to be sentenced to be flogged or tortured to death, 'though,' he adds grimly, 'many do die under torture.' In section 16 we read that 'it sometimes happens that the punishment of particular crimes is made more severe because they are more prevalent and an example is needed'. The governor himself was to decide when an example was needed.

[3] *H. E.* v. 21.

account of the affair drawn from his own lost *Book of Ancient Martyrdoms*. We have besides Greek and Armenian Acta.

The story as given in the *History* is that Apollonius, a Christian and a philosopher, was denounced by a servant of the devil, and tried before Perennis, the praetorian prefect. The informer, in accordance with an imperial edict, was immediately crucified and, as part of the sentence, his legs were broken. Perennis did not venture or did not choose to try Apollonius himself, but begged him to make his defence before the Senate. Accordingly Apollonius appeared before the Senate and there delivered a powerful apology on behalf of Christianity. But inasmuch as an ancient law ordained that those who had once been brought to trial upon this charge must either recant or die, he was condemned and executed by a decree of the Senate.

Jerome says[1] that Apollonius was a senator and that he was denounced by a slave, meaning probably by his own slave. Both statements may be new inferences from the account in the *History*, and if so the second inference is hazardous if not incorrect, for what Eusebius says is that the informer was an agent or slave of the devil. The Armenian Acts do not call Apollonius a senator and do not mention the punishment of the delator; the Greek Acts say that the legs of the martyr himself were broken.[2]

There is an accumulation of dark points in this narrative.

Why was Apollonius brought first before the praetorian prefect, when the magistrate who presided at the trial of Christians was usually the prefect of the city? To this it may be answered that the commander of the guard, at first a properly military office, had become more and more of a high justiciary; that the post was frequently occupied by eminent lawyers, and that the trials for *maiestas* are known to have been held by the praetorian

[1] *De Viris Ill.* 42.

[2] The Armenian Acts were published in English by Mr. F. C. Conybeare in his *Monuments of Early Christianity*, in 1894; the Greek Acta in 1895 in the *Analecta Bollandiana*, xiv. 284 sqq.; see the review by Harnack in the *Theol. Litzg.* for Nov. 9, 1895, No. 23; also *Chron.* i, p. 307.

prefect.[1] There is therefore nothing surprising in the part played here by Perennis.

Why again did Perennis crucify the informer and send Apollonius to a higher court? Delation of a master by his own slave was a capital offence, but under Commodus the law had been commonly broken and after his murder the Senate demanded with loud outcries that it should be henceforth observed.[2] But it may be that on a charge of Christianity an upright magistrate like Perennis would enforce the law. It is, however, probable that the delator of Apollonius was not a slave at all, and yet may have died the death of a slave. There is a case in point. Severus, afterwards Emperor, towards the end of the reign of Commodus, was charged with having consulted Chaldean astrologers with the purpose of ascertaining who would be the next Emperor. The charge was remitted to the praetorian prefect, who acquitted Severus and sent the delator to the cross.[3] It may very well be the case, then, that Apollonius also was charged before the praetorian prefect on some trumped up charge, that Perennis put the informer, whether a slave or not, to death, but having ascertained in the course of the investigation that Apollonius was a Christian sent him on this fresh charge to be tried by his peers, having no jurisdiction over senators. If this view be allowable the only question remaining is whether Apollonius really was a senator. It is probable enough that he was, though we have no direct evidence except the statement of Jerome. There were many philosophers and rhetoricians in that august body.[4] If this point be conceded we may accept the Acts as historical and the apology contained in them as genuine. Further, the Senate was not bound by the summary rules of procedure generally followed in trials of this nature by the inferior courts. The Roman house of peers, like all similar assemblies, was ex-

[1] See Schiller, i, p. 655; an instance will be given immediately.

[2] *Vita Commodi*, 19 'Seruorum subornatores de senatu.'

[3] *Vita Severi*, 4.

[4] Can we suppose that our Apollonius was the son of that Apollonius of Chalcis who was one of the tutors of M. Aurelius?

tremely tenacious of its privileges and treated Apollonius just as they were in the habit of treating a senatorial governor accused of misconduct. They allowed the accused to make what answer he thought fit, at whatever length he chose. But the law since Trajan's time had declared Christianity in itself a capital offence, and they now formally declared this rule to be applicable even to a member of their own body, though, as Eusebius assures us, at this very time the new religion was making great progress among the aristocracy.

There is another passage concerning the reign of Commodus that must not be omitted for the sake of the extraordinary light which it throws upon the condition of the Roman Church at this time. It is in the account given by Hippolytus of the early life of Callistus.[1] It was written by a learned and able man who had steeped his pen in venom.

Callistus had been the slave of Carpophorus, a freedman of Commodus, a high official in the imperial household, and a Christian.[2] It was a common practice for rich masters to set up a clever slave in some business, for which they provided the capital, and from which they drew the lion's share of the profits. Accordingly Callistus was installed by Carpophorus as a banker for Christians in the Piscina Publica.[3] At first he prospered, many of the brethren and even widows depositing their funds in his keeping. But things took a bad turn, and he became bankrupt. Callistus absconded, made for the harbour, and embarked upon a ship with the intention of leaving Italy, and finding his pursuers close at hand, threw himself into the water with the desperate intention of escaping torture by suicide. He was fished out of the sea, carried back to Rome, and there thrown into the *pistrinum*, the house of correction for slaves. The brethren interceded for him, urging that, if time were allowed, he would be able to pay his creditors, and Carpophorus agreed to give him another chance.

Callistus accordingly endeavoured to collect his debts,

[1] *Phil.* ix. 12.

[2] Duchesne (*Histoire Ancienne de l'Église*, vol. i, p. 294) identifies him with M. Aurelius Carpophorus: see *C. I. L.* vi. 13040.

[3] The twelfth of the Regions of Rome: see Jordan, ii. 103 sqq.

and with this object visited a synagogue on a Sabbath day and begged the Jews to discharge their obligations. They, however, seizing this excellent opportunity of wiping out their debts without payment of money, beat the poor man and dragged him off to the court of Fuscianus, the prefect of the city,[1] and there charged him with disturbing their worship and with being a Christian.

Here we have an extraordinary occurrence. Hippolytus says that Callistus forced himself into the synagogue because he wanted to die, but we may find a more reasonable explanation. Callistus was a banker for Christians; this in itself is a sign of the times. Many individual Christians had trusted him with their money, and it seems probable that the funds of the Church also were in his keeping. It seems not unlikely that the Jews had formed some kind of a ring, with the object of ruining the Christian bank and putting the whole Church in an awkward predicament. Such modes of financial warfare are quite modern, and no doubt quite ancient also.

On learning what had happened, Carpophorus himself came flying down to the court, and assured Fuscianus that Callistus was not a Christian at all (possibly he was at the time excommunicate), that he was a ruined man and tired of life. Here we have another curious fact—a well-known Christian of high position venturing into the lion's den, and giving evidence on behalf of a fellow criminal before the prefect of the city. In the end Fuscianus ordered Callistus to be scourged and sent to the mines of Sardinia, on which of the two charges we do not know. Shortly afterwards Marcia sent for Pope Victor, and directed him to make out a list of the Sardinian martyrs. This she presented to Commodus, and obtained from him an order for their release. With this document she sent Hyacinthus, a priest, and her own foster-father (she would appear then to have been a foundling brought up from infancy in the Christian faith) to Sardinia. The prisoners were immediately set free, but the name of Callistus was not upon Victor's roll. However, upon the personal guarantee of

[1] In 188 or 189: see Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 258 note.

Hyacinthus, the governor allowed him to depart with the others. On his return Victor judged it not wise that one who was still regarded with suspicion by many members of the Church should remain in Rome, but sent him to Antium and allowed him a small pension. Zephyrinus, the next Pope, recalled him to the city, ordained him, and set him over the cemetery which still bears his name.

Such, if we omit the malevolence and explain some of the difficulties, is the account given by Hippolytus of the early life of Callistus, who, after the death of Zephyrinus, became himself Pope in 217 or 218.

Hippolytus pursued him to the last with undying rancour. He charges him with having treated the easy Zephyrinus as a puppet, and played fast and loose with the Sabellian heresy until he 'thought that he had attained what he was always hunting for', until, that is to say, he became Bishop of Rome. After this, Hippolytus says, 'fearing me and thinking that he could thus avoid condemnation by the Church,' he artfully threw himself into the orthodox ranks and drove Sabellius out, inventing a fresh heresy and asserting that 'the Word was Himself Son and Himself Father in name, but in reality one thing indivisible in spirit; not that Father is one thing and Son another, but that both are one and the same thing'. Thus he set up a school against the Church. Further, he pretended to have power to forgive all sins. Again, that though a bishop committed a mortal sin, he ought not to be deposed. Yet again, he admitted to ordination bishops, priests, and deacons who had married twice, or even thrice, and did not punish clergymen who had married after ordination, quoting the apostolic words, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' and the parable of the Tares and the Wheat. Women also he permitted to yield themselves to a paramour, slave or free, and treat him as a husband, though not lawfully married to him. And, lastly, he first dared to rebaptize.

Hippolytus, it will be seen, attacks both the theology and the discipline of Callistus: the first as heretical, the second as criminally lax.

As to theology, it should be observed that Hippolytus was a subordinationist of that older school which was afterwards represented by the Roman Novatian. What these writers taught will be explained later on. They all believed in the divinity of the Son, but they were more concerned to distinguish Him from the Father than to express or explain the Unity of the Persons.

Now Tertullian was already teaching that all Three Persons are *ex eadem substantia*; a few years later we find the Roman bishop, Dionysius, using the Nicene watchword *homoousios*, and we know that this term was regarded with an evil eye by the Eastern conservatives, who, from the Council of Nicaea to that of Constantinople, constantly maintained that it was Sabellian. It is possible that this formula was already in official use in Rome, and that Callistus spoke of one and the same essence in Father and in Son. He charged Hippolytus, we are told, with ditheism, and Hippolytus would naturally retort that Callistus himself was a Sabellian, that he had sat for years upon the fence, and that his final condemnation of the heretic Sabellius was mere hypocrisy.

In respect to discipline, Hippolytus belonged to the Puritanical rigorists who had existed in Rome from the time of Hermas. They held that the tares ought to be rooted out from the wheatfield, and that the Church had received no commission to forgive 'death-sins'. Twice they were strong enough in Rome to rebel; Hippolytus and Novatian were both Antipopes, but they were never predominant either there or elsewhere. The martyrs of Lyons, as we have seen, believed that even apostasy, the deadliest of death-sins, might be forgiven, and the bulk of the Church always held that no particular sin was beyond reach of Christ's mercy even in this life. The followers of Montanus, of Hippolytus, and of Novatian all held the opposite view, and all failed, not because the Church was becoming laxer, but because few could read the Gospels and yet believe that the rigorists were faithfully representing their spirit.

Hippolytus is so fierce, and so deeply tainted with the

polemical vice of attributing to his adversaries every crime which an unscrupulous logician could represent as the natural result of their teaching, that it is not easy to make out what Callistus really did. If Callistus taught that heretics ought to be rebaptized, he was teaching what the Western Church afterwards condemned, and what the Eastern Church has always approved. If he allowed his clergy to marry more than once, and even to marry after ordination, we may say that if he allowed he did not necessarily approve, and that, if he approved, he was wiser than Hippolytus. If, again, he proclaimed that all sinners might be forgiven, he was unquestionably in the right. What is meant by the assertion that he retained in office bishops who had disgraced their calling we do not know, because the particular cases in question are not upon record. Callistus may have been too merciful a judge, but again the truth may have been simply that he regarded as innocent men whom Hippolytus thought guilty, and it is only too probable that Hippolytus was wrong in his judgement. The most interesting question is what truth underlies the statement that Callistus sanctioned marriages between free women and even women who belonged to the *honestiores* with freedmen or slaves or *humiliores*. By the Roman law no slave could contract marriage at all, and marriages between a woman of rank and a poor man or freedman, if not absolutely unlawful, were regarded as such outrages against social decorum that a woman would often prefer a state of concubinage to such a mésalliance.[1]

It would not be correct to say that the Church made no distinction at all between bond and free. But Callistus had been a slave himself, and knew that many slaves and freedmen were educated and excellent men. He was well acquainted with the corruption of society in Rome, and it is in no way surprising that he should have been driven to

[1] For impediments to marriage according to Roman law see Ulpian, *Fragmenta*, v. 2 sqq. in Huschke; Karlowa, ii. 172; Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, i. 471; Döllinger, *Hippolytus und Kallistus*. Tertullian, who was a good lawyer, in *ad Uxor.* ii. 8, takes the same view as Hippolytus, that grave inequality of condition is a bar to marriage, and ought to be recognized as such by the Church.

the conclusion that inequality of status ought not to be regarded as a bar to Christian marriage. The wonder is rather that Hippolytus should have taken this stiffly Erastian view, and insisted that the law of the state ought to be obeyed when it imposed purely conventional impediments upon matrimony, when he himself was going against the law of the state in one direction and possibly in two. For he wanted to restrain the legal freedom of the clergy in respect of marriage, and we may take it as certain that he did not approve the unlimited right of divorce allowed by the code. Nevertheless in this point also Callistus was before his time. The view of Hippolytus prevailed, and down to the eighth century inequality of condition was regarded as a bar to marriage.[1]

Hippolytus is in one way better known to us than any of the early Fathers, for the larger portion of the monument erected over his grave still remains. In 1551 a statue was discovered which, though headless and without name, was unmistakably identified as that of Hippolytus; it is seated on a marble chair, on the base of which is an inscription giving a list of his works and his Easter cycle. The monument bears striking testimony to his learning and to the wealth of his admirers. But two circumstances obscured his fame. He was the last Christian theologian who wrote in Greek, and he appears to have been a rebel. Origen visited Rome, knew him personally, and heard him preach. After this his history and fame disappear in a cloud of neglect and ignorance. In the fourth century it was not known of what city he was bishop, and some writers, misled by a vague phrase in Eusebius,[2] believed that Hippolytus had presided over the Church of Bostra in Arabia. Indeed Hippolytus appears to have been more honoured in the East than in the West, and an ancient Coptic collection of ecclesiastical rules belonging to the third century bears his

[1] See article 'Marriage' in *Dict. of Christian Antiquities* and Döllinger's *Hippolytus und Kallistus*. The first post-apostolic utterance on the subject of divorce will be found in Hermas. At what time a Christian ceremony of marriage was introduced appears to be unknown. See below in chapter xix.

[2] *H. E.* vi. 20.

name under the form of Abulides. Dr. Lightfoot thought that he was Bishop of Portus, the harbour of Rome. But the most probable view is that he was Antipope;[1] and this will in great part account for the strange oblivion into which he fell.

Hippolytus was, however, too great a figure to be wholly forgotten in the city where he had played so conspicuous a part. In the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235–8) he appears to have been sent with Pope Pontianus to the mines of Sardinia. Pontianus died in that abode of pestilence, and it is probable that Hippolytus shared his fate,[2] but we do not know how he died nor whether he was reconciled to the Church before he passed away.

He was buried at Rome on the Ides of August, 236–8, in a catacomb, which was called by his name, not far from the later church of St. Laurentius. Here he had a sanctuary which late in the fourth century was enlarged and beautified by Pope Damasus, and an inscription composed by the Pope himself and engraved by the skilful hand of his artist, Filocalus, was set up within it. A few years later this memorial underground chapel was visited by Prudentius on August 13. He describes[3] the throng of visitors on that day to the tomb of the saint, the shrine of solid silver, the inscription, and the picture in which the scene of martyrdom was brought vividly before the eyes of all. Hippolytus, the poet tells us, was a priest who had joined the schism of Novatus,[4] but abandoned his erroneous views on the way to death. He was seized at Ostia, cast into prison, and finally dragged before some unnamed official for judgement. Asked what was his name, he replied, 'Hippolytus.' 'Then let him be Hippolytus,' was the sentence. Accordingly, like the old Greek hero, he

[1] This is the view of Döllinger, *Hippolytus und Kallistus*; of Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 212; and of Duchesne, who says (*Histoire Ancienne de l'Église*, vol. i, p. 312) that Hippolytus maintained himself as *chef d'église dissidente* throughout the time of Callistus, Urban, and Pontian. It is quite clear from his own language (quoted above) that he did not recognize Callistus as bishop.

[2] Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 212.

[3] Περὶ Στεφάνων, xi.

[4] This is of course an anachronism, yet not without a certain germ of truth. But Prudentius is following the inscription of Damasus.

was bound behind two fierce horses and dragged at full gallop along the strand of Ostia until he was torn to fragments. So freely did devout people suffer their imaginations to play in the time of the poet, and such legends did they evolve out of a name.[1]

[1] See Döllinger, *Hippolytus und Kallistus*; Lightfoot, *St. Clement of Rome*, vol. ii, p. 317 sqq.; Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 209. The list of the works of Hippolytus is best given in the last-named book; the remains have of late been greatly increased.

CHAPTER XIX

HEATHEN NOTICES OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE SECOND CENTURY

Before we pass on to speak of the apologists it will be convenient to collect the notices of Christianity made by heathen writers in the course of the second century. In this way we shall gain a clearer view of the complaints which the Church was deeply concerned to refute.

In the reign of Trajan the historians Tacitus and Suetonius both refer, the former at some length, to the persecutions of Nero. Both belong to the aristocratic circle and reflect the incurious scorn with which the great Romans regarded the appearance upon the stage of a new crew of Oriental fanatics. Tacitus believed that the Jews worshipped an ass,[1] and that the Christians were enemies of the human race.

Pliny, a member of the same coterie, was forced into personal contact with the Christians during his government of Bithynia. He had been told that their morality was infamous, inquired into the facts, and frankly acknowledged that the charge was baseless.

Epictetus, the best of the later Stoics, notices[2] that 'the Galilaeans' had learned 'by discipline' to despise the power of tyrants. This is in his view one of the highest encomiums. He goes on to complain that reason and demonstration seldom produced so stanch a faith in God.

It is curious that 'Galilaean' as an equivalent for

[1] *Hist.* v. 3. 4. We find this absurd fiction before Tacitus in Diodorus Siculus, 34. 1. It came from Posidonius and was repeated by Apollonius Molon and Apion; see Josephus, *contra Apionem*, ii. 7; Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* iii. p. 256. Plutarch also believed it, *Quaest. Conv.* iv. 5, 2, and Fronto; see Min. Felix, *Octavius*, ix.

[2] iv. 7. 6.

'Christian' seems to be next employed by the Emperor Julian.[1] Epictetus does not apparently use the name as a term of derision. He knew something of the Jews, of whom he speaks not uncharitably.[2] Many of his phrases have a remarkably Christian sound. It is possible that he was not unacquainted with Christian teaching and that he regarded it with tolerance, but as inferior to his own.

In the next reign we have the Letter of Hadrian to Servianus, caustic and superficial but not hostile. Phlegon of Tralles, the freedman, confidential friend and literary executor of Hadrian, appears to have had some knowledge of the Gospels, possibly of St. John's Gospel, for he allowed that our Lord was a prophet.[3] He also recorded an earthquake which occurred in A.D. 32, when 'it became night at the sixth hour of the day, so that stars were seen in the sky'. Whether Phlegon himself identified this earthquake with that mentioned in the history of the Passion is not quite clear.[4]

Under the Antonines several other well-known personages made more or less detailed references to the new religion.

Aristides the Rhetor, a famous person in his art, friend of an Asiatic proconsul Quadratus, finding occasion to make an onslaught on the cynics, compares them to 'the impious men in Palestine', especially in this respect that 'they do not respect their betters'. They are the enemies, he says, of Greek culture, flout Demosthenes, and ridicule the philosophers; they cause strife in households and cannot cure it; they will not grace the religious festivals and refuse to sit upon town councils. Such charges might be made with equal truth against Christians and against cynics, who in their good and their evil bear a curious resemblance to the Mendicant Friars.[5]

Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus,

[1] See Harnack, *Mission*, p. 288 note. [2] i. 11. 12; 22. 4; ii. 9. 20.

[3] Origen, *Celsus*, ii. 14. The text is corrupt, but it seems that Phlegon referred to Christ's prophecy about the death of Peter.

[4] See Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* iii. p. 607; Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 512.

[5] Aristides, *Or.* xlvi, ed. Dindorf, ii, p. 402. See Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 517; Harnack, *Mission*, p. 350; and for the cynics, Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 349 sqq.

was, like Aristides, a rhetorician. Both men bear the stamp of their trade, but they are very different in character. The latter was extremely religious, a valetudinarian devotee, looking anxiously to Aesculapius and other gods for miraculous relief in his many aches and pains; but he was a Greek, retaining much of the liberal culture and something even of the freedom of his race. Fronto was an African, to whom literary grace and judgement were by no means inherited possessions, a Roman barrister who had pushed himself to the front by the help of great people, a courtier with more than a dash of servility, and not at all religious. He is important only because of his close connexion with Marcus Aurelius. That he had much influence upon the Emperor is not likely; but there is no doubt that he reflected in his shallow way the tone of the imperial circle. His oration against the Christians, which made some noise at the time, is lost; it contained a full and particular account of the Christian 'banquet', at which, upon a given signal, the lights were upset by a dog and all sorts of horrid things were perpetrated in the ensuing darkness by the drunken worshippers.[1] It is highly probable that Caecilius, who in the *Octavius* argues the case for Paganism, represents Fronto and reproduces the general line of Fronto's lost oration. Caecilius is described as a superstitious agnostic, agnostic by reason or rather rationalism, superstitious by temperament; it is a character which, self-contradictory as it appears, is common in modern India and even in modern England, and was exceedingly common in ancient Rome under the early Empire. As superstitious Caecilius kisses his hand to a statue of Serapis, as agnostic he maintains that man knows and can know nothing about God. There is something to be said for the deities of Rome; they made Rome great and glorious, and therefore those who cling to the ways of their forefathers are doing what is perhaps the best thing in their power. But the Christians are a rabble of ignorant fanatics, debauchees, conspirators, followers of a man who was deservedly crucified. Some said that they worshipped the head of an ass, some ascribed to them

[1] Min. Fel. *Oct.* ix; Ter. *Apol.* 7.

obscene rites; certainly they adore the cross, which is exactly what they deserve. Their doctrines, so far as they are known, are absurd; Caecilius singles out for special ridicule the idea that God runs up and down the world, examining the secrets of men's hearts, the belief that the world would be shortly destroyed by fire, and the hope of a bodily resurrection.[1]

It is a purely rhetorical attack, resting upon the greatest ignorance, fiercely intolerant, uninspired by any sort of religious conviction. But it represents the opinions of many officials in the time of Marcus; as we see from the story of the persecution of Lyons.

Fronto's master, Marcus Aurelius, devotes one line to the Christians. He is speaking of suicide. We ought, he says, to be always ready to die, whether there is a future life or not, and to die in a dignified way without any sort of fuss,[2] 'not out of mere obstinacy like the Christians.' Marcus knew very well how Christians died, for he had killed them by scores. The reader may compare the eulogy which the Stoic slave Epictetus bestows upon their fortitude with the frigid exasperation of the Stoic Emperor.

Galen, the philosophical physician, blames the Christians for their invincible prejudices. We ought, he says, to beware of medical dogmatism 'lest, like those who have entered the school of Moses and Christ, we should start by lending our ears to laws that do not admit of demonstration'. Again, 'It is easier to convert the adherents of Moses and of Christ than physicians and philosophers who have surrendered themselves to the scientific sects.'[3] Men who profess to be governed by logic jump into unverified hypotheses, for which they are ready to go to the stake; it is just the same with Christians and Jews. Yet, he adds, in spite of their lamentable want of method, the practical conclusions of Christians agree with those of the best philosophy. 'Most men cannot follow a chain of demonstrative reasoning; and therefore need to be taught by parables. So in our time, we see those who are called Christians gathering their faith

[1] Cf. Celsus in Or. *c. Cels.* iv. 11; v. 14.

[2] xi. 3 *ἀπραγμόνως.*

[3] *De Puls. Diff.* ii. 4; iii. 3.

from parables. And yet sometimes they do just the same things as genuine philosophers. For that they despise death we can all see with our own eyes, and further that, led by modesty, they shrink from carnal lusts. For there are amongst them men and women who throughout their lives have maintained unbroken chastity. There are even those who in self-discipline and self-control and by the most ardent desire for excellence have advanced so far that in nothing are they inferior to true philosophers.'[1]

Galen offers a fine tribute to the morals and even to the faith of Christianity. But what will strike the reader most is the modernity of his judgement. Esoteric religion, he seems to say, is one, or, as it has been put, 'all sensible men are of the same religion'; exoteric religions are many and all imperfect, though some are morally superior to others and Christianity is one of the best. It is essentially the same view as that of Renan. The great French critic ranks as first amongst the causes of the victory of Christianity the fact that the world, in the second century, was crying for a moral reform which neither polytheism nor philosophy could effect; polytheism because it is never moral, philosophy because it is never popular. 'Reason has few martyrs.' 'Man is born so commonplace that he is good only when he dreams. He must have illusions, in order that he may do what he ought to do for pure love of virtue.' Galen said exactly the same thing. Man must have his parables. Philosophers, we may add, must have their paradox. Dreams, illusions, parables, without which truth is dead—what are they?[2]

Celsus took much the same view as Galen, but he was a man of harsh and scornful temper. He too holds that philosophy is the only true guide, and that the vulgar must have their myths. But he compares the Pagan myths with

[1] This passage is twice given; in shorter form by Gregory Abulpharagius, *Hist. Dynastiarum*, ed. Pococke, 1663, p. 78, as from Galen's commentary on the *Phaedo*; more fully by Abulfeda, *Hist. ante Islam.* ed. Fleischer, p. 109, as from a commentary on the *Republic*. See Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 515; Harnack, *Mission*, p. 157.

[2] Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 561–85.

the Christian, and finds the latter gross, immoral, and far inferior to the former. His general theory is that of Plutarch. There is one supreme and wholly good God, who employs as His ministers a vast army of demons; these inferior beings, sometimes nearly quite good, sometimes all but wholly evil, are as it were the proconsuls and lower officials by whom Caesar governs the world. But Celsus combined with this Platonism and Neopaganism a view borrowed from some of the sceptical academics, that man is by no means the chief of God's creatures upon earth. If man kills the tiger the tiger kills man. Snakes and eagles know antidotes against poison which our physicians have never discovered. Birds teach men augury; the elephant, the stork, the phoenix, are much more pious than man, and the bee is quite as wise and sociable.[1] Why then should men in general, or Christians in particular, think themselves special objects of the divine favour? It was this view, a view not unknown in modern times, that misled Origen into thinking that Celsus was not a Platonist but an Epicurean.

The *True Word* of Celsus is the first thorough-going attack upon the whole Christian position.[2] Before the author took up the pen he had studied his subject. 'I know all about it,' he says. And indeed he did know much. He had read the four Gospels and the Books of Genesis and Exodus, possessed some acquaintance with the Prophets and the Pauline Epistles, had dipped into Gnostic or Jewish Christian writings, knew the dialogue between Jason and Papiscus and possibly other literature also. He was aware of the distinction between 'the great' or Catholic Church and the heretics, though he sometimes confuses orthodox teaching with Gnostic vagaries of which he knew more than Origen himself. He had travelled in the East and conversed with religious professors of every shade, some of whom might be called Christians. Nor does he wish to be unjust. He pours out his scorn with perfect impartiality upon the begging priests and mountebanks of the popular religions. He does not repeat the fables about

[1] Or. c. *Cels.* iv. 78–90.

[2] See Keim, *Celsus' Wahres Wort.*

Oedipodean lust and Thyestean banquets, though he throws in an allusion to them, and he acknowledges the purity of Christian morality. But when he charges the Christians with sorcery, want of patriotism and disloyalty, when he emphasizes the point that every Church is an illicit college and every member of it a conspirator, he is walking very closely in the steps of Fronto, and doing his utmost to put a sharper edge upon the law. Indeed we may suspect that Celsus was a man of the same stamp as Fronto. He writes rather in the style of a clever official than in that of a man of books. There is always a ring of menace in his words. Like many a severe magistrate in those days he condescends to argue and even to implore, but while he preaches his sermon he holds the naked sword.

The *True Word* falls into two divisions, of which the first is put into the mouth of a Jew while in the second Celsus speaks with his own voice. This arrangement gave him a double advantage. It enabled him to attack Jesus under cover. All that would be most offensive to Christian ears is assigned to the Jew; where Celsus speaks in person he is much more temperate and conciliatory. Again, he hated and scorned the Jews. In his eyes they were 'runaway Egyptian slaves, who had never done anything worth speaking of', and their sacred books were mean and ridiculous to the last degree. He scoffs at Egyptian beast-worship; the Jews were infinitely beneath the Egyptians and the Christians were renegade Jews whom their miserable countrymen despised and hated. These people, he means, who are breaking the religious peace of the world, are the very scum of humanity, rebels by nature and tradition, whose ideas cannot really be worth consideration by a sensible Greek.

The point insisted upon by the Jew is the baseness and the failure of the life of Jesus. He was the son of Mary by a wandering Gentile soldier named Panthera. The prophets foretold 'a great prince, lord of all the earth, all nations, all armies, not a pestilent fellow like this'. Compare His Passion with that of Bacchus in Euripides. King Pentheus, who had dared to imprison the god, was torn in pieces. But

Pontius Pilate suffered nothing. Why did not Christ, at the last, if not before, show His divine power, save Himself from this shame, and punish those who thus outraged Himself and His Father? On the Cross He craved for drink, unable to bear thirst with ordinary fortitude. And do ye reproach us, ye most faithful ones, that we do not hold Him for a God, nor agree with you that He bore all this for the good of man, that we also should be able to despise punishment? The truth is that as long as He lived He persuaded nobody, not even His own disciples, and finally was punished and endured all this. His life here was a complete failure, and you will surely not say that, finding that He could do nothing with men here, He marched off to Hades, to persuade people there. You may invent absurd apologies for Him, but if we are to accept them, why should we not accept any one, who has been condemned and died a miserable death, as a divine messenger? Any one who is impudent enough may say of any executed robber or murderer: He was no robber but a God, for he foretold to his fellow robbers what he was to suffer. The evidence of miracles the Jew derides, on the ground that our Lord Himself confessed that evil men could work miracles; the evidence of prophecy on the ground that, if He had known what He was to suffer, He would have endured it with more courage. As for the Resurrection, the witnesses were 'a half-crazy woman, as you say, and possibly another of the same band of charlatans who dreamed it, or thought he saw what he wanted to see, or, more likely, who desired to astonish his fellows with this piece of nonsense, and by this lie to prepare the way for other dishonest impostors'.

It is odd that a really clever man like Celsus should not have asked himself why, if Christ had so utterly failed, it should be necessary to write this book.

Celsus himself believed that the soul was the work of God, that the body was formed by inferior deities out of matter, that matter is the cause of evil, and, therefore, as matter is a definite quantity, that there could never be either more evil in the world or less. It follows that God needs no

'improvements'; in other words, that no revelation or increase of revelation is possible. Men, or at any rate some men, have reason, the systematic expression of which is philosophy, and this is their only and sufficient guide. Hence again an Incarnation, a Resurrection of the body, a 'coming down of God', are wholly incredible. So far as such ideas have any source at all they are merely blundering attempts to express in coarse figures what is far better taught by the heathen myths. What irritates Celsus more than anything else is the impudence of the Christian teachers. They knew that they knew nothing, and that is why they are for ever saying 'Do not inquire. Only believe'. There are two remarkable passages which illustrate this spirit of contempt:

'This is their cry: Let no educated men enter in, none wise, none prudent, for these things we count evil. But if any be ignorant, any foolish, if any untaught, if any childish, let him come boldly. These they count worthy, as indeed they are, of their God, and it is therefore obvious, that they can and will persuade only fools, and baseborn, and dullards, and slaves, and silly women, and children.[1] . . . We see in private houses, wool-carders, cobblers, fullers, the most ignorant and rudest fellows, never daring to open their lips in the hearing of grave elders or sensible masters. No, they get the children and foolish wenches into a corner, and tell them wonderful things: "Do not listen to your father or your tutor, but to us; they talk nonsense, they are dotards, so stuffed up with idle prejudices that they neither know nor do anything right. We alone know how one ought to live. Listen to us and you will be happy and the house will prosper."'[2]

Again,

'The priests of other mysteries cry, "Come ye that are clean of heart and discreet of tongue, ye that are pure of all stain, whose spirit knows no guile and whose life has been good and just." But whom do these Christians invite? The sinner, the foolish, the childish, the unhappy. These the Kingdom of God will admit. The sinner! that is, the unjust, the thief, the burglar, the prisoner, the robber of temples and tombs. Why it is a robber's invitation! God sent to sinners! Not to the sinless? Why, what harm is

[1] Or. c. *Cels.* iii. 44. [2] Ib. 55.

there in being without sin? The unjust man, then, if he brings himself low through his wickedness, God will receive, but the just, who practises virtue, and looks up to Him from the first, He will not receive. Men, who rightly administer justice, compel the prisoner to cease from wails and laments, lest justice should be warped by pity. But God, as it seems, is guided in His judgements not by truth but by flattery.'[1]

Celsus thought that persecution was the right way to deal with these misguided fanatics, and even argues that the defencelessness of the Christians against the cruelty of the heathen law was a proof that their God had no power to save. Here again he agrees with Fronto and with Marcus Aurelius. He allows that, if a man were called upon to blaspheme or disobey God, he ought to bear any torture, any kind of death, rather than stain his soul. But the Christians cannot avail themselves of this plea. The Pagans also worship God, and know well that they must never forsake Him by night or by day, in public or in private. There are therefore no conscientious scruples in question, and so Celsus practically agrees with Marcus that the martyrs suffer out of 'mere obstinacy'. Only let them give up this 'impostor', this 'dead man', and listen to common sense. Celsus has no doubt of his ability to put the case in a way which even Christians must feel to be irresistible. You say, he argues, that you may not serve two masters. But you do so already, for you put Christ by the side of, or even above God. Why cannot you also give due honour to the demons? You say it is not lawful for you to eat at their table. But you cannot help doing so. They send you corn and wine; theirs is the water you drink, the air you breathe. Why not acknowledge the debt which you cannot avoid? You think the honour paid to these beings sometimes excessive? So do I.[2] You are afraid of idolatry? But do not suppose that we confound the god with the statue, the reality with the emblem.[3] It is true that God is to be worshipped above all. But He permits, and requires, due and reasonable honour to be paid to His agents, just as Caesar expects men

[1] Or. *c. Cels.* iii. 59, 62, 63.
[2] Ib. viii. 60, 62.
[3] Ib. vii. 62, 66.

to reverence his own majesty in the person of his proconsuls. Why then cannot you join in our religious feasts and sing a paean to Athena or the sun?

But the most remarkable part of this remarkable book is its ending. You cannot suppose, says Celsus, that, if the Romans gave up their traditional religion and statecraft and threw in their lot with you, your God would come down and be their champion. Why, He does not protect either the Jews or you. If you were to convert the whole Empire—and he who hopes for this knows nothing—the Empire would be ruined, and you with it. If Caesar falls the rule of the earth must pass into the hands of wild and lawless barbarians, and not only Christianity but true wisdom will vanish away. It behoves you all then to help the Emperor with all your might, to share his labours in righteous fashion, to fight for him, to march with him to the field, to take your share in the government of your fatherland, and to do this for the preservation of the law and of piety.[1]

Celsus was no doubt writing in the dark times of the Marcomannian War. It is a convincing proof of his ability that he alone of all the men of his time saw clearly the power of the Church, and the danger of pushing a large and capable body of citizens into despair, at the very time when the Empire was struggling for life. It is a pity that he could not look just a little farther, and understand that the best way to secure their patriotism was to let them alone.

As it is he bears striking testimony to the growth of the Church at this time. Further, it will have been observed that, by thus attacking all along the line, he has proved what it was that the Church believed at this time. The Christian Creed, with the exception of the article on the Holy Spirit, might be reconstructed from the *True Word*, and, eager as Celsus was to avail himself of every argument, he was evidently not aware that any point of the faith had not been held from the first. Even his Jew informants had not suggested this.

Our next witness is Lucian the essayist, a highly educated and accomplished man, and a thorough sceptic, sceptical

[1] Or. c. *Cels.* viii. 69–75.

even of scepticism. He was probably acquainted with Celsus, for he wrote his account of Alexander of Abonoteichos by desire of a friend of that name who had himself published more than one book 'against magicians'.[1] The author of the *True Word* was certainly an enemy of all persons to whom this title could be given.

Alexander was what we should call a medium, a thaumaturgist or γόης, tall, handsome and venerable in appearance, as all these rascals were in antiquity; personal comeliness was part of their stock in trade. He professed to be a descendant of the hero Podalirius and carried about with him a tame snake, which he called Glycon and declared to be the god Aesculapius. He delivered oracles, and wrought miracles of the type with which his modern counterparts have made us familiar. He met with immense success, completely bewildered the people of Bithynia, Galatia, and Thrace, married the daughter of Rutilianus a Roman senator, was accepted as a true prophet by Marcus Aurelius, who on his advice threw two lions into the Danube as a propitiatory sacrifice in the Marcomannian War, and gave him permission to coin a medal in honour of Glycon. Finally, after his death he received divine honours.

Alexander used to begin his exhibitions with a sort of parody of the Eleusinian mysteries. First the hierophant cried, 'Out with all Christians.' To this the devotees responded, 'Out with all Epicureans.' Bithynia at the time was full of Christians—the persecution of Pliny had produced no lasting result—and Christians at this time were not credulous.

Another impostor whom Lucian undertook to expose was Peregrinus, or, as he called himself, Proteus, a strange being, who after a vicious youth became a cynic, then a Christian, then a cynic again, and finally ended his troubled existence by burning himself alive at the Olympian festival in presence of the assembled multitude. After his death he also was worshipped; his statue was set up in his birthplace Paros, and was believed to give oracles.[2] Lucian describes him as haunted by a crazy desire for notoriety at any price.

[1] Lucian, *Alex.* 21.

[2] Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 26.

Gellius, who knew him, thought him a true philosopher and edifying moralist.[1]

However at one time Proteus joined the Christians, having learned 'their wonderful wisdom' from 'priests and scribes' in Palestine. In a very short time he became their prophet, band-leader, convener,[2] expounded their books and wrote them new ones. They honoured him as a god, and made him their lawgiver and patron. He was denounced, arrested and imprisoned. The Christians did their utmost to obtain his release, and, failing in this, exerted themselves to mitigate his sufferings. 'At early dawn you might see old women, certain widows, and orphan children waiting at the prison door. The Christian officials actually slept with him in the prison, having bribed the jailers. Then dainty suppers were smuggled in, and sacred words were recited, and the worthy Peregrinus (for he was still called by this name) was hailed by them as a new Socrates. Nay, deputations came from some of the cities of Asia, sent by the Christians at the common expense to help him and act as his advocates, and comfort him, for on such occasions they show extraordinary speed, and, in a word, spare nothing. And thus Peregrinus reaped a large harvest of money to console him in his bonds.' 'For their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brethren.'[3] Hence they are an easy prey to every clever impostor.

Peregrinus was set free by the governor of Syria, who was a philosopher, and saw that he only wanted to be a martyr. For some time he kept up his profession of Christianity, till one day the brethren 'saw him, as I imagine, eating forbidden food', when they turned him out.[4]

Lucian's account of this episode is loose in details. He did not know the proper titles of the clergy, and the idea of Peregrinus composing new scriptures is absurd. But his treatment as a confessor, the way in which clergy, widows, and orphans waited upon him in prison, can easily be illustrated from Christian documents. Probably many such

[1] *Noct. Att.* xii. 11; so also Amm. Marcellinus, xxix. 1. 39.
[2] Προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεύς, Luc. *De Morte Pereg.* 11.
[3] Ib. 13. [4] Ib. 16.

cases had occurred within Lucian's knowledge. It will be noticed that the Legate of Syria dismissed Peregrinus without punishment. This happened not uncommonly. Lucian as a sceptic speaks with contempt of the 'wisdom' of the Christians, but for the rest does them no injustice. They were a simple people, easily gulled by any one who called himself a brother, but they cherished a very sensible hatred of quacks, and their character was amiable.

Towards the end of the second century the Neoplatonic school made its appearance. One of its earliest doctors was Numenius of Apamea, who was acquainted with Philo and the Gospels, reckons the Jews together with the Brahmins, the Magi, the Egyptians, among the inspired races to which philosophy owes the true conception of God, and calls Plato an Attic Moses.[1] Renan[2] refers also to a Syrian, Mara son of Serapion, who calls Jesus an excellent legislator, and held that the misfortunes of the Jews were a punishment upon them for having put to death 'their wise King'.

Upon the whole it may be gathered that the only bitter enemies of Christianity among educated people were the rhetorical officials, a class to which Fronto certainly and Celsus probably belonged. Philosophers, men of letters, professors of science, speak of them with tolerance, which as the century closes deepens into respect.

Tertullian affirms that the respectable citizen was not actively hostile. 'Caius Seius,' one would say, 'is a good man, though he is a Christian.' Or again, 'I cannot understand why so wise a man as Lucius should suddenly turn Christian.'[3] Men of this class had been heard to say, 'See how those Christians love one another.'[4]

The vulgar regarded this mutual affection as proof of a dark conspiracy, and caught greedily at the basest accusations. The Christians, they said, met in darkness, and knew one another by secret signs, from which one might safely infer the most dangerous intentions and the utmost de-

[1] Clement, *Strom.* i. 22 ; Eus. *Praep. Evang.* ix. 7, 8 ; Origen, *c. Cels.* i. 15 ; iv. 51 ; v. 57 ; Theodoret, *Cur. Graec. Aff.* serm. i, p. 466, 19 ; serm. ii, p. 499 ; serm. v, p. 547 ; Paris ed. 1642.

[2] *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 435 n. [3] *Apol.* 3. [4] Ib. 39.

pravity. In the time of Tertullian, at Carthage, a blackguard renegade Jew posted up a great placard; it bore the picture of a man with the ears and one foot of an ass, dressed in a toga and carrying a book; below was the inscription, 'Onocoetes, the God of the Christians.'[1] This was no doubt deadly earnest, intended to cause trouble. But about the same time we find this ridiculous myth used to point a boy's jest. In the pages' schoolroom of the palace of Severus, roughly scribbled on the wall, was found a picture. On a T-shaped cross hangs a man, clothed in shirt and tunic, with the head of an ass. A figure dressed in the same way is adoring him, and beneath are the words, 'Alexamenus worships his God.'[2] There were Christians as well as heathen among the pages of Severus, and one of the latter, when the master was out of the room, amused himself by scratching on the wall with the sharp end of his stylus this skit upon his playmate and class-fellow.

[1] *Apol.* 16; *Ad Nat.* i. 14.

[2] See Aubé, *Histoire des Persécutions de l'Église*, ii. 96. This graffito is now in the Kircher Museum at Rome.

CHAPTER XX

THE CHURCH AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND CENTURY

It will be well to pause here upon the threshold of the third century and collect together some facts which have been left unnoticed, or noticed only in passing and in a cursory way. Of the history of the Church down to the reign of Trajan our knowledge is exceedingly scanty. From that time onwards our information is much richer; but there are still lamentable gaps in the story, and many points of great importance can only be explained by inferences and conjectures.

It is clear that during the second century there had been great and rapid expansion. During the same space of time the worship of Isis and Mithra had overspread the whole Empire, and it is hardly reasonable to suppose that the growth of Christianity had been less imposing. But as yet the Church produced no monuments of a durable kind. There is hardly anything for the archaeologist to register: a mere handful of inscriptions, possibly the Cenaculum at Jerusalem, possibly the buried house of Clement at Rome, a portion of the Roman catacombs and a few frescoes hidden away in their passages and vaults, are all that we possess. All documents except a few books, all Church rolls and registers, acts of synods, dry business records of bare facts which would have been inexpressibly valuable, have vanished. The beginnings of all histories suffer from the same cause.

Of the geographical expansion of the Church we can form a tolerably accurate idea from the lists of names of places collected by Dr. Harnack.[1] They cover pretty nearly the whole Empire, and even reach on the eastern side

[1] In his *Mission*, pp. 409 sqq.

beyond the frontier. Osrhoene, of which the capital was Edessa, was not incorporated in the Empire till 216, but some dozen years before this Christianity had been adopted as the state religion of the little kingdom.[1] In the extreme West Tertullian[2] speaks of churches in Britain. Our information is defective; we do not hear of places which were untroubled by controversy or persecution; for instance, we should not know that there were Christians in Spain if the fact had not been incidentally noticed by Irenaeus[3], or in Dalmatia unless the archaeologist had found proof that a church existed there early in the second century.[4] Perhaps the best indication of the strength of Christianity in the several provinces is afforded by the persecutions. We have heard of them in Asia, in Greece, in Gaul, in Africa. In Rome there appear to have been frequent executions, but since Domitian no persecution on a grand scale. In those districts where we hear of no trouble we may perhaps infer that the Church was not yet strong enough to cause alarm.

But about the end of the second century we find a greatly increased confidence, and a sense of approaching triumph in the ecclesiastical writers. It is expressed most strongly by Tertullian: 'We are of yesterday,' he cries, 'but we have filled your whole world, cities, islands, country towns and settlements, even the camps, the tribes, the decuries of judges, the palace, the senate, the bar. We have left you only your temples. We can count your armies: the Christians of a single province exceed them in number.'[5] Tertullian is always rhetorical, but this proud boast must have been something like the truth. No doubt the mass of Christians, and even of the clergy, belonged to the poorer classes, but there were always exceptions, and in the second century these became very numerous. Even in the Book of Acts we read of Dionysius the Areopagite, of Sergius Paulus, and many ladies of position at Thessalonica. There seem to have been persons of wealth and a certain

[1] Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 9 sqq.; Harnack, *Mission*, p. 441.
[2] *Adv. Iud.* 7. [3] *Haer.* i. 10. 2.
[4] Harnack, *Mission*, p. 492. But see 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[5] *Apol.* 37.

standing among those who are mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans. Pomponia Graecina, Flavius Clemens, and his wife Domitilla were of high rank. Hermas gives the impression that the Church of Rome included many members who were not good Christians because they were fashionable and well-to-do, and Ignatius addresses the community as possessing considerable influence. The Roman lady, of whom Justin Martyr speaks in his second Apology, must have been wealthy and of some social consideration. In the time of Commodus we find Apollonius, who was certainly a man of rank, and Eusebius tells us that many nobles joined the Church at that time. Among the Christians of Bithynia early in the second century were persons of every order. Tertullian says that they were to be found in every dignity,[1] and Clement of Alexandria wrote a treatise[2] directed to wealthy believers. In Caesar's great household there were at all times numerous Christians who, if mainly of servile origin, were nevertheless important people. St. Paul speaks of them.[3] The two envoys whom Clement of Rome dispatched to Corinth, Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, probably belonged to this class, as may have been the case with Clement himself. One of Justin's companions in martyrdom was Euelpistus, a slave of Caesar's. Irenaeus speaks of the faithful in the royal palace,[4] and of Florinus as holding some position at court. A little later we read of Marcia and Carpophorus. Severus used as his body-physician a Christian, Proculus Torpacion,[5] and employed a Christian wet-nurse for his son Caracalla. Beyond this point we need not go, but believers were numerous in the household of the heathen Emperors down to the reign of Diocletian.[6] Further, in the oldest portions of the catacombs have been found inscriptions commemorative of persons bearing the lordly names of Acilius Glabrio, Pomponius Graecinus, Bruttius Praesens. Some of them are thought to have belonged to the second

[1] *Apol.* 1. [2] The *Quis Dives Salvetur.* [3] Phil. iv. 22.
[4] iv. 30. 1. [5] Tert. *Ad. Scap.* 4.
[6] See Harnack, *Mission*, p. 383 sqq.

century, but dates are rare.[1] All this would seem to show that the language of Tertullian was at any rate within a measurable distance of exact truth, and it is confirmed to some extent by Celsus, who, when he urges the Christians not to stand aloof from the service of Caesar, clearly implies that there were very numerous Christians who might render the state substantial assistance if they would.

Abercius, as has been noticed, gives us to understand that towards the end of the second century the ceremonial of the Church of Rome was elaborate and costly. About the same time we may gather that the old house-churches were being replaced by edifices specially constructed for public worship—churches proper, we may call them. Tertullian speaks of his church in a way that would seem to imply this.[2] A church in Dalmatia has been noticed, and in 203 a church at Edessa was destroyed in a great flood.[3] These were probably churches proper. At any rate it is certain that in the reign of Alexander Severus there were buildings erected at the expense of the Christian community in Rome and owned by them as a community. It is difficult not to suppose that Alexander was merely giving sanction to a state of things which had already existed *de facto*, though not *de iure*, for some time before.

The later basilica type of church seems to have been merely an improved adaptation of an ordinary Roman house of the better sort.[4] Such houses contained a large hall or *atrium*, opening at the farther end into a room called the *tablinum*, and at each side into two other rooms known as the *alea*. Here we have the ground plan of a cruciform basilica; the *atrium* forms the nave, the *tablinum* the chancel, the *alae* the transepts. At the upper end of the *atrium*, in front of the *tablinum*, stood an ornamental stone table, on which were placed the images of the Penates; and here, probably, in the old house-churches stood the altar, with the clergy ranged behind it and facing the congregation. But the *atrium* of an average town-house can hardly

[1] Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 4 sqq.
[2] *De Pud.* 4. [3] Dr. Hort's article, *Bardaisan*, in *D. C. B.*
[4] Lowrie, *Christian Art and Archaeology*, p. 98 sqq.

have been capacious enough for a large congregation. Enlargements and improvements must have become very numerous by the time of Commodus.

A highly interesting point, on which we have unfortunately no information at all, is that of the tenure of the church. At first, no doubt, the owner simply lent his house as a meeting-place for the brethren. But what happened if he moved away from Rome, or when he died, or if the lease ran out, or if the property was sold and passed into other hands? Often, no doubt, the Church must have been obliged to shift its quarters; thus the house of Clement appears to have been used at one time as a Mithraic sanctuary. But some houses appear to have remained permanently devoted to the purpose of Christian worship.

How was this possible? The case is entirely different from that of cemeteries, which has been considered above. Here the question is how an unlawful society was able to hold real property for the purpose, not of burial, but of carrying on an unlawful worship.

When Christian son succeeded Christian father in the ownership of the estate, the church may have been regarded as private property. But, if the owner of the house had been put to death for his religion, his property would have been confiscated. Now we never read of the confiscation of a church before the time of Valerian.

Did the Church as a community hold the building? This would appear to be more impossible still. A lawful college could possess property,[1] but the Church was not a lawful college.[2] A more hopeful solution may perhaps be found in the Roman law of *fidei commissum*, or trusteeship, a branch of equity which came into existence in the time of Augustus, and was perpetually being enlarged by the jurists. Gaius[3] regards the *fidei commissum* as a legal device for enabling people to hold property who by common law had no right to do so. Hadrian endeavoured to prevent what he regarded as a gross abuse—that foreigners, or Latins, or even in some cases women, should be able to possess

[1] *Digest*, iii. 4. [2] Tert. *Apol.* 38, 39, 50.
[3] *Inst.* ii. 246–80, in Huschke's *Fragm. Jur. Antejust.* (Teubner series).

through a trustee what otherwise they were incapable of holding. But later on Ulpian[1] tells us that, though a municipality could not inherit because it was not a *certa persona*, yet a bequest left to it by way of *fidei commissum* would stand. It is just possible that the Church also managed to evade the law and to keep its buildings under cover of a trust, perhaps a secret trust, for such things are not unknown even in modern England.

The Roman law was always far more tender for property than for persons. But the authorities must have deliberately shut their eyes and refused to see the Christian churches. And this in a time of persecution. They did not break in the doors[2] and net the worshippers, nor did they question the right of tenure. These are very singular facts. There is a vast difference between the old heathen persecutors and their counterparts in the Middle Ages. Pagans would not have violated the safe-conduct given by Sigismund to Hus at the Council of Constance, nor would they have compelled heretics to abjure, and then put them to death. They were always half-hearted in the bloody work, and many of them knew quite as well as the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* that 'force is no attribute of God'.[3]

We may pass on to the organization of the Church. Attention has been already called to the first appearance of provincial synods, especially in the East, in connexion with the Paschal and Montanist disputes. In each civil province the bishops were beginning to group themselves around one of their number, who, in some cases at any rate, was not so much metropolitan as primate, and owed his position rather to his age or character than to the dignity of his see. Nevertheless some of the greater Churches, Rome, and

[1] xxii. 5 in Huschke as above.

[2] Tert. *Apol.* 7 sq. 'Quotidie obsidemur, quotidie prodimur, in ipsis plurimum coetibus et congregationibus nostris opprimimur.' We may understand this to mean that the police at Carthage at this time watched the doors of the church. But I cannot recollect any instance of an arrest actually made in church. Pionius, indeed, and his companions were seized while celebrating the 'birthday' of Polycarp, but this seems to have been a private gathering of friends in an ordinary house (*Acta Pionii*, ed. Ruinart, in Lightfoot, *Ign.* i. 455).

[3] *Diogn.* 7.

perhaps Lyons in the West, Alexandria, Antioch, and Ephesus in the East, appear from very early times to have enjoyed a recognized though indefinite precedence. As soon as internal disagreements became serious, it was found necessary to subject even the bishop to some degree of official pressure. As yet, and indeed for some time to come, the pressure was entirely moral. One bishop might write to remonstrate with another, might even refuse to communicate with him. But the first instances of the penal deposition of bishops by their flocks or by their fellow bishops belong to the middle of the third century. The main safeguards of unity had been constant epistolary correspondence, the frequent visits of travellers, and to some extent literature.

The recognized officials of the Church were Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. In the course of the second century a fourth order was added, that of Readers.

The vexed question as to the origin of the Episcopate has been touched upon in the chapter upon Clement of Rome. We have seen also the views of Ignatius and of Irenaeus on the power and necessity of the office. The veneration with which the person of the bishop was regarded is best shown by the trivial fact that Polycarp had never been allowed to take his own shoes off, the brethren regarding it as a high privilege to perform for him any kind of menial service.[1] Whether as yet the bishop received any special consecration is matter of inference. Jerome believed that until late in the third century the Bishop of Alexandria was made by the priests of that diocese. In the *Canons of Hippolytus*,[2] a document which probably belongs to the early years of the third century, it is directed that the bishop, having been elected by the people, shall be consecrated in prescribed form by 'one of the bishops and presbyters'—an obscure phrase which may mean 'by a bishop *and* a presbyter', or less likely 'by a bishop *or* a presbyter'. About the middle of the century we read that Novatian was consecrated at Rome by three bishops,

[1] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 15. 30.

[2] Published in Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4, ed. Achelis, p. 39 sqq.

and this is the Nicene rule.[1] Here we have clear indications of development in the usage, but we are unable to say what was the exact practice in the two first centuries.

As to the priest, the *Canons* order that he shall be ordained in the same form of words as the bishop, except that the name of bishop is to be omitted from the prayer, adding, 'Let the bishop be treated as in all things equal to the priest, except in the name of his chair, and in ordination, because the power of ordination is not given to the latter.'[2] But the most remarkable provision is that a confessor, who has suffered torture for the Name, shall be entered on the roll of priests without any form of ordination, even if he be a slave. The bishop is to say a prayer over him, but is to omit the petition that he may receive the Holy Spirit, because he has manifestly received it already. In such cases 'confession is ordination'.[3]

According to the *Canons* the confessor possesses, as a gift bestowed upon him directly by the Holy Spirit, the power of the keys. Strange as this statement may seem, it is not without strong confirmation. In the Lyons persecution we find the confessors in jail bestowing forgiveness upon those who had denied Christ and then repented. In one of his Montanist treatises,[4] Tertullian acknowledges that this was the ordinary view, but repudiates it. About the middle of the third century it was repudiated also by the Roman Church and by Cyprian, yet at the very same time the claim of the confessors was admitted by Dionysius of Alexandria.[5] Thus the confessor lost this priestly power in the West, though he seems to have retained it some time longer in the East.

The deacon was ordained by the bishop, who laid his hand upon him, using a fixed form of prayer. He was to serve the bishop and priests in all things, and not only at

[1] Letter of Cornelius in Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 9.

[2] *Canons*, p. 61 sq. So Jerome (*Ep.* 146 *ad Evang.*) asks 'quid enim facit excepta ordinatione episcopus quod presbyter non faciat?' Cp. Chrysostom, *In* 1 *Tim. hom.* 11. 1.

[3] *Canons*, p. 67 sq. See also the *Testamentum Domini*, xxxix, ed. Rahmani, p. 93.

[4] *De Pud.* 22.

[5] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 42. 5.

the time of mass; in especial he was to seek out and visit the sick. He was to report to the bishop their needs. Further, he was to inform himself of all members of the flock who were suffering privations which they were unwilling to make known, and to recommend them as worthy objects of compassion not only to the bishop, but to such brethren as might be able to assist them. The prayer of ordination implored God to bestow upon him the power of conquering all the power of the crafty one by the sign of the cross: he was to act as exorcist, and to be of blameless morals and sound doctrine, for in the course of his charitable visitations he would have frequent opportunities of speaking a word in season, not only to Christians but to pagans.[1] One of his most important and dangerous duties was to visit those who were in prison for the faith.[2]

The lector or reader, who appears distinctly about the end of the second century, is a much controverted personage.

In the Jewish synagogue the ruler called upon any one he chose to read the lesson and to expound it.[3] In the New Testament we do not find any clear instance of a special official of lower rank charged with this combination of duties, and 'reading' appears to be generally used of private study of the Scriptures.[4] In a document belonging to the middle of the second century, the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement*, we find the earliest known Christian sermon. It was read from manuscript in church, and it has been supposed that it was delivered, not by a priest but by the lector. This is not a necessary inference from the text, and is probably an error.[5] About the same time Justin Martyr informs us [6] that the Liturgy began with the reading of a lesson from the Apostles or Prophets which was

[1] *Canons*, p. 64 sqq. [2] *Passion of St. Perpetua*, 3. [3] Luke iv. 16.

[4] An exception may possibly be found in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. iv. 13), when St. Paul, writing to Timothy, says: 'Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.'

[5] The words are 'Let us not think to give heed and believe now only, while we are admonished by the presbyters, but likewise, when we have departed home, let us remember the commandments of the Lord'; 2 Clem. 17. The better view is that the preacher was a presbyter; but Dr. Harnack takes the other interpretation.

[6] *Ap.* i. 67.

not of fixed length but went on till the congregation were all settled in their places. Justin does not say whether the reader was a layman or a cleric, but he ascribes the duty of preaching to the president, the bishop, or presbyter. Tertullian [1] distinguishes the lector from the layman and places him below the deacon, but, as elsewhere he recognizes only three orders of clergy, it is possible that he regards the lector as neither altogether cleric nor altogether lay, but as occupying the same sort of intermediate position as the ancient widow or the modern parish clerk. In the *Canons of Hippolytus* the reader is established by a half-ordination; the bishop does not lay hands upon him, but simply delivers to him a copy of the Gospels.[2]

The rank of the lector is very uncertain. One authority, the *Apostolic Church Order*, places him before the deacon.[3] The *Canons of Hippolytus* set him after the deacon and before the subdeacon, of whom we do not read till later, in the third century.[4] Pope Cornelius [5] ranks him much below the subdeacon, on the same level with the exorcist and doorkeeper. But in the fourth century, in a law of Constantine dated 330, he comes before the subdeacon.[6]

Cyprian of Carthage, who was contemporary with Pope Cornelius, would not allow the old rule that a confessor was *ipso facto* a priest, partly because he knew that not all of these sufferers were men of blameless lives. Some of them again were below the canonical age; others were uneducated. Still he allowed that they ought to be ordained to the priesthood, if their characters were satisfactory, as soon as convenient. In the meantime he made them *lectors*, ordering that they should receive the same allowance as the priest. These confessors would therefore pass at once from the readership, which Cyprian ranked as low as

[1] *De Praescrip. Haer.* 41.

[2] p. 70; cp. also *Testamentum Domini*, xlv, p. 105.

[3] Hilgenfeld, *Novum Test. extra Can. Rec.* vol. iv, p. 117. He calls the document the *Duae Viae vel iudicium Petri*. See also Harnack, *Lehre der XII App.*, p. 234; Syriac text in *J. T. S.*, vol. iii, p. 59; Latin text in Hauler's *Verona Fragments*, p. 93.

[4] p. 71. [5] In Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 11. [6] *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2. 7.

Cornelius, to the priesthood, overleaping the diaconate.[1] One of the confessors of whom Cyprian made lectors was Aurelius, who did not know how to write, or presumably how to read.[2] The lector and subdeacon belonged to the clergy; below them came a class of laymen who were called *clero proximi*, and were what we should call candidates for ordination. They were examined from time to time by the bishop assisted by his *presbyteri doctores*, chaplains, or theological professors. One of these laymen was Saturus, who had been permitted to read the lessons on Easter Day. Another was Optatus, who had been made lector to the *doctores audientium*, that is to say assistant catechist.[3] There were, therefore, persons who were called lectors in a lower sense, and were undoubtedly laymen.

Dr. Harnack[4] thinks that the reader was a survival of the old prophet, who once had a high, even the highest, place among the officers of the Church, but was pushed ever downwards till he fell into one of the lowest places in the hierarchy. But some will find his arguments unconvincing. In one sense the Church never had a charismatic ministry, in another men thought that it always had one. Any brother who had 'a gift', a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, was naturally chosen for a place among the clergy. It seems likely that the multiplication of the minor orders was caused partly by the elaboration of ritual, but partly also by the desire to provide dignities and stipends for religious men who showed themselves active in private mission work—such as those of whom Celsus complains—and yet were not qualified by manners and education for the higher offices. Reading is not a very high gift, and the reader's place was not high. It is possible that he was at first allowed to preach in church by permission of the bishop, for among the qualifications of the reader enumerated in the Greek text of the *Apostolical Church Order* one is that he should have a gift of exposi-

[1] Cyprian, *Epp.* 39. 5. [2] *Epp.* 27. 1; 38. 2. [3] *Epp.* 29.

[4] See his *Sources of the Apostolic Canons*, Eng. trans., where a great mass of references will be found collected.

tion.[1] We may infer that he was on occasion allowed to do so from the fact that Origen in 215 preached, in the church of Caesarea, in presence of two Palestinian bishops, while still a layman. But what Alexander and Theoctistus held to be lawful was regarded by Demetrius of Alexandria as against the law. We may infer that this privilege of preaching in church, which had once been permitted to laymen and readers, was beginning about that time to disappear.[2]

Three other classes, of which we often hear, were the widow, the deaconess, and the orphans.

There is a remarkable direction in the *Apostolical Church Order* that every Church should maintain three widows, of whom two should be devoted to prayer 'for all that are in temptation and with a view to revelations,'[3] while the other is to be a sick-nurse, working under the priests.

Of these three female officials we do not read again in the body of the *Didascalia*,[4] which is no doubt later than the *Apostolical Church Order*. What we find here is a much larger class of widows. They were entered upon the church-roll by the bishop not under the age of fifty,[5] for fear lest they should fall away and remarry, and they were expected to live in due subordination under the clergy. But they caused their pastors endless trouble.

They were among the chief objects of the almsgiving of the wealthy, which seems to have been exceedingly large, and therefore were commonly called the Altar of God, or of Christ.[6] So large were the gifts showered upon them that many of them became wealthy women, lent money at interest, and kept a banking account.[7] Some of them sponged upon the rich, and there were violent jealousies among them.

[1] Hilgenfeld, p. 117. This is also in the Latin translation; Hauler, p. 93; but not in the Syriac text given in *J. T. S.*, vol. iii, p. 71.

[2] See on this point the report of a committee of which the Bishop of Salisbury was chairman, printed in the *Chronicle of the Convocation of Canterbury for* 1904.

[3] Hilgenfeld, p. 118.

[4] In Mrs. Gibson, *Horae Semiticae*, I–II, cc. xiv, xv.

[5] St. Paul's rule is not under sixty, 1 Tim. v. 9.

[6] Cf. Polyc. *Phil.* iv; Tert. *Ad Ux.* i. 7.

[7] Hipp. *Phil.* ix. 12. Callistus when a banker in Rome had sums deposited with him by widows.

They also undertook to act as evangelists, or domestic missionaries, especially among the women, and were inclined to magnify their office. They visited the sick and those who were under penance. If they made a convert they would baptize him. They would pray and fast with the excommunicate, which was against the rule. Their teaching was not always discreet.

Hence the widow is warned that it is her duty to sit at home, and not 'wander and gad about among the houses of believers in order to receive', and it is ordered that all gifts are to be given, not to the widow herself, but to the bishop on her behalf. This last rule was not an innovation. We find it at a much earlier date in Justin, who tells us that the Eucharistic alms are given to the president and by him distributed, by the agency of the deacons, among widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners, strangers, and all that are in need.[1] The *Didascalia* is speaking of private almsgiving, which was evidently very liberal and not always judicious. The Church did not wish to check liberality, but from a very early date she began to feel the need of method and wisdom in charity.[2]

The ministerial function, which the more unruly widows presumed to exercise, belonged properly to the deaconess. She was elected by the bishop for the service of women, 'for,' it is said, 'there are houses where thou canst not send a deacon to the women, on account of the heathen.' The deaconess helped at the baptism of the women; she anointed them, and afterwards instructed and supervised them.[3]

When Lucian tells us how the widows waited upon Peregrinus in his prison, he says that they were accompanied by certain orphans. These also were on the roll of the Church, and were no doubt called upon for such little services as they could render. Funds for the relief of destitute children were instituted in numbers by the State or by wealthy and

[1] *Ap.* i. 67.

[2] See Mrs. Gibson's Eng. trans. of the *Didascalia*, chaps. xiv, xv; and *Die Syrische Didascalia*, in *Texte u. Unters.* N. F. x. 2, p. 274 sqq. But Achelis makes too much of the widow, who is neither more nor less than as she is described in 1 Tim. v. She was intended to be simply a bedeswoman.

[3] *Didasc.* xvi.

humane individuals from the time of Nerva to that of Marcus Aurelius. They provided each boy or girl with an allowance in money. Unfortunately it was a short-lived form of beneficence, and in the troubled times that followed the Antonine age the funds disappeared.[1] The charity of the Church was less princely, but it was universal and enduring. The bishop was enjoined to find a home for every orphan in some private family; if a girl, he was to select a Christian husband for her as soon as she grew up, by preference the son of her adoptive parent; if a boy, he was to be taught a handicraft, that he might cease as soon as possible to be a burden upon the community.[2]

The official language of the Church was Greek, except in Eastern Syria. Everywhere the vernacular dialects were no doubt used, as by Irenaeus in Gaul, but not in public worship, nor in formal literature. But in the West Latin was coming into use; the Old Latin version was in existence, at any rate for a large part of the New Testament, before the time of Tertullian.[3] The first considerable Latin writer is Minucius Felix, if he belongs to the second century; the next is the African Tertullian; the next are the Roman Novatian and the African Cyprian.

Of the Liturgy, Justin Martyr gives an accurate outline; indeed he gives two. The points of the Sunday service were the lesson, the sermon, the prayers (during which the congregation stood)[4], the offertory, the Prayer of Consecration (which was extempore, and was followed by Amen), and Communion. In the account of the Baptismal Eucharist the lesson is omitted, and the kiss of peace is given between the prayers and the offertory.[5] In the third century we find a great part of the service reduced to writing, but even

[1] Dill., *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 192; Schiller, *Kaisergeschichte*, see Index, *s. v.* 'Alimentarinstitution.'

[2] *Didasc.* xvii.

[3] See Harnack, *Chron.* ii. p. 296 sqq.

[4] Tertullian (*De Orat.* 23) tells us that some few do not kneel to pray on the Sabbath. He himself thought that men ought always to kneel, except on Sunday, and from Easter to Pentecost. There was much debate on this point in the Churches at the time (cp. *De Cor. Mil.* 3). The Council of Nicaea, *Can.* 20, ordained that men should always pray standing.

[5] *Ap.* i. 65, 67.

then the bishop is recommended to give thanks from the heart, not using any prescribed form.[1]

Certain other points in the services of the Church may here be noticed.

As to Baptism. The form of words was in all probability that which we use now, though there is no explicit testimony to the fact earlier than Justin's.[2]

The baptism of infants was certainly in use in the time of Tertullian, though this Father discouraged the practice.[3] The *Canons of Hippolytus* mention it without comment as quite an ordinary thing.[4] Clement of Alexandria does not expressly speak of it. Before the middle of the third

[1] *Egyptian Church Order*, in *Canones Hippolyti*, ed. Achelis, p. 69. On these documents see Mr. Brightman's *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, p. xxiii sqq.

[2] *Ap.* i. 63. Recently there has been much controversy upon this point. Two questions are involved: (1) The text of Matthew xxviii. 19 has been disputed. All MSS. and versions which contain this verse agree in the command to baptize in the Three Names. So also do the Diatessaron, and, among the older Fathers, Irenaeus, iii. 17. 1 (Latin); Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, 14; Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 13. Mr. F. C. Conybeare, however, argues that the words *βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος* are a dogmatic interpolation, mainly on the ground that Eusebius of Caesarea often (not always) quotes the verse without the words, or as if he found in his copy of St. Matthew simply *μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου*. See Mr. Conybeare's articles in *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1901, p. 275, and *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1902, p. 102. But there can be little doubt that the words in question are an integral part of St. Matthew's Gospel. (2) Was the Trinitarian formula used from the first in the rite of baptism? In Acts converts are said to be baptized in the Name of Christ; see ii. 38; viii. 16; x. 48; xix. 5; there are similar phrases in the Epistles of St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 13, 15; Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3; Hermas, *Vis.* iii. 7. 3; *Sim.* ix. 12. 4. It is to be noticed that Justin, who certainly used the Trinitarian formula, speaks of Christians as 'enlightened' (baptized) *διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, as if the two expressions meant one and the same thing; see also the *Didache*, chaps. 9 and 7. The use of the Son's Name was the crucial point in which Christian baptism differed from all other baptisms, Jewish or pagan, that of John or that of Mithra. Hence to say that a man was baptized into Christ was an adequate though not a complete statement. Further, considering the close connexion between baptism and the bestowal of the Spirit of Prophecy, it is difficult to suppose that the Name of the Holy Ghost was omitted. See especially Acts xix. 1–7. St. Paul uses the Benediction in the Three Names, and it is probable that baptism, the highest of all benedictions, was conveyed by the same formula. See articles by Dr. Chase in *J. T. S.* vol. vi, p. 481; by Dr. Plummer in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*; by the Dean of Westminster in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. See also note on the *De Rebaptismate* below, p. 379.

[3] *De Bapt.* 18.

[4] p. 94.

century an African council had decided that baptism might be given at any time after birth. One Fidus wrote to Cyprian urging that the sacrament ought always to be deferred to the eighth day, partly on the analogy of circumcision, partly because babies are unpleasant objects to kiss for the first week of their lives. Cyprian[1] maintains the resolution of the council. Origen in one of his later treatises, having learned at Caesarea the doctrine of original sin, adopted the same view, though this logically involved the sacrifice of his theory of pre-existence. No doubt the practice was regarded as lawful before the time of Tertullian, though no one expressly says so.

The method of baptism was by immersion, though there were exceptions in cases of alarming sickness, or of imprisonment for the Name's sake. Thus Novatian was baptized by aspersion in bed; and Perpetua and some of her companions were baptized after their arrest, but before they were thrown into jail, possibly by aspersion, though this is a doubtful inference. There is a fresco of the second century in the Catacomb of Callistus which has been supposed to represent baptism by aspersion, but may more easily be interpreted in the other way.[2] A special place for baptism, a large font, called a 'sea' or a 'pool', is mentioned in the *Canons of Hippolytus* and in the *Egyptian Church Order*.[3] Tertullian speaks of a *lavacrum* or *alveus*,[4] but also says that any water and any place would answer the purpose.[5]

The rite of baptism included the renunciation and a confession of faith. These are alluded to by Justin.[6] 'We renounce,' says Tertullian, 'the devil and his pomp and angels.'[7] The confession of faith was made, in response to questions, by the candidate, as he stood in the water. 'Dost thou believe,' he was asked, 'in the Father, in Jesus Christ the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit?' To each question he answered, 'I believe,' and at each of these three responses he

[1] *Ep.* 64. 4.

[2] See Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, ii, plate 27; 'Notes on the Didache' in *J. T. S.* vol. v, p. 579; *Studia Biblica*, v. 4, *Baptism and Christian Archaeology*.

[3] *Canons*, p. 94 sqq. [4] *De Bapt.* 7. [5] *De Bapt.* 5.

[6] *Ap.* i. 61. [7] *De Cor. Mil.* 3.

was plunged beneath the water.[1] Out of these baptismal interrogatories took shape the old Apostolic Creed, which at Rome existed in a tolerably precise shape about the middle of the second century.[2]

The favourite times for baptism were Easter and Pentecost, but all days were proper for this purpose. Godparents we read of in Tertullian[3] and in the *Canons of Hippolytus*.[4] Of subordinate ceremonies connected with baptism we find in the *Canons of Hippolytus* a preliminary fast, exorcism, chrism, the laying on of hands, crossing, a kiss, the giving of milk and honey.[5] Communion followed immediately.

As to the Eucharist. If we may trust the dispatch of Pliny upon such a point, it was in Bithynia as yet one and the same thing with the Agape, and was celebrated at some interval of time after the service of lauds which preceded dawn. In the Church of Antioch under the rule of Ignatius the case appears to be the same.[6] In the time of Justin it seems clear that the two rites are distinct; the Eucharist is celebrated ordinarily on 'the day of the Sun', but at what hour Justin does not say. In the *Canons of Hippolytus* the two rites are sharply distinguished. The Agape is of three kinds: (1) the General Agape, or charitable feast, given to the poor by some wealthy individual on the Sunday at the time of the lighting of the lamps; (2) the *Anamnesis*, a religious feast in commemoration of the departed on the anniversary of the death; it was preceded by the Eucharist; (3) a supper given to the widows in the afternoon.[7] At these love-feasts the president might be either cleric or lay. If a bishop was present he prayed, preached, and broke the bread. If a priest or deacon, he prayed and broke the bread. If a layman was in charge, he simply broke the bread.

[1] *Canons*, p. 96 sq.; 'ter mergitamur,' Tert. *de Cor. Mil.* 3.

[2] The literature on this subject is very large. The student may refer to H. B. Swete, *The Apostles' Creed*; A. E. Burn, *An Introduction to the Creeds and to the Te Deum*; Zahn, *The Articles of the Apostles' Creed*, Eng. trans.; C. H. Turner, *History and Use of Creeds and Anathemas*; Sanday, *Recent Research on the Origin of the Creed*, in *J. T. S.* vol. i, p. 3, and vol. iii, p. 9. In the last-named paper will be found reference to the most important foreign literature on the subject.

[3] *De Bapt.* 18.

[4] p. 94.

[5] See also Tertullian, *de Cor. Mil.* 3.

[6] Lightfoot, *Ign.* i, p. 387.

[7] *Canons*, pp. 100, 105, 106, 111.

The Eucharist is to be celebrated 'whenever the bishop will', not on Sunday alone. A pretty full account of the ritual is given in the *Canons* which need not be here described in detail. Two points, however, call for notice. The clergy are to be 'clothed in white garments, fairer than those of the laity, and as splendid as possible'.[1] White was regarded as a religious colour both by Christians and by heathen. But as yet, and for long afterwards, there was no distinctive pattern for the clerical habits. They are simply directed to wear the dress of gentlemen, but of material as good, and of ornamentation as beautiful, as the means of the Church will allow.

The other point concerns the hour at which the Eucharist proper was celebrated, upon which depends the question whether it was always received fasting.

In the time of Tertullian it was celebrated both at early services before dawn, and later in the day,[2] and the same diversity of practice existed in Africa some fifty years afterwards. Cyprian himself preferred the early morning on the ground that, though Christ Himself suffered in the evening, in order to fulfil the type of the Paschal Lamb, the Church communicates mainly in memory of the Resurrection.[3]

Whether there was any general rule of fasting before communion is doubtful. In point of fact, if the Eucharist was celebrated even as late as ten o'clock in the morning, the people would be still fasting, as the *prandium*, the earlier of the two customary meals, was not generally taken before that hour, but from the Epistle of Cyprian already quoted it appears that some of the African Christians kept their communion in the afternoon. In the *Canons of Hippolytus* it is ordered that the newly baptized should not break the regular ante-baptismal fast till after their first communion, nor should those who have undertaken to keep that fast with them.[4]

There is a further instruction in the *Canons*.[5] 'Let none of the faithful taste anything, unless he have previously taken of the mysteries, especially on days of fasting.' The meaning appears to be that before every meal the Christian

[1] *Canons*, p. 118.
[2] 'Etiam antelucanis coetibus' (*De Cor. Mil.* 3).
[3] *Ep.* 63. 16.
[4] *Canons*, p. 102.
[5] *Canons*, p. 119.

should swallow a few crumbs of the consecrated bread. It was customary in the first four centuries to carry home a portion of the Eucharist, and Tertullian tells us that a fragment of this portion was consumed 'before all food'.[1] The *Egyptian Church Order* gives a singular reason for this practice: the sacred bread was regarded as a safeguard against poison.[2]

The difficult and unfortunately highly contentious subject of the doctrine of the Eucharist has already been touched upon as opportunity offered. Here we need only notice a striking but difficult passage in the *Apology* of Justin Martyr:[3] 'As by a word of God Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh and had flesh and blood for our salvation, so also the food over which thanks have been given by a word of prayer, that food from which our blood and flesh are nourished by a change, is, as we were taught, both flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.' There seems to be a parallel drawn here between three 'changes'. Christ is made flesh; the bread and wine are the flesh and blood of Christ; and change again into our flesh and blood. The underlying thought appears to be that the sacred body is actually turned into bread. This belief may perhaps be traced in Cyprian,[4] and in Novatian,[5] who are both extraordinarily materialistic; also probably in those Alexandrines who held what Origen calls 'the less intelligent view',[6] and certainly in Macarius Magnes, who labours to provide it with a pseudo-philosophic foundation.[7] Christ made the earth, and out of the earth made the body of man, His own body, and bread and wine. Hence bread *is* His body, 'since the body is from earth, and bread and wine are also from earth.' No ordinary man could say, This bread is my body. But the Lord could, because He was Creator. Bread is not

[1] *Ad Uxorem*, ii. 5.

[2] *Canons*, p. 119. For the custom of carrying home the elements see Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 26; Ambrose, *De Excessu Fratris*, i. 43. Basil tells us that the custom was very common in Egypt, *Ep.* 93; Jerome also speaks of the usage, *Ep.* 125 *ad Rusticum*, ed. Vall. i. 946.

[3] i. 66. [4] *De Lapsis*, 25, 26. [5] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 18.

[6] Κατὰ τὴν κοινοτέραν περὶ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἐκδοχήν, *Comm. in Ioann.* xxxii. 24.

[7] iii. 23, ed. Blondel, p. 103.

a figure of the body (this view Macarius emphatically rejects) but *is* the body. Even of common bread this is true, but common bread only satisfies hunger, while the Eucharistic bread, 'being united with a power of the Holy Spirit, by the mere taste makes man immortal.' But most of the ante-Nicene writers who have expressed their view upon the presence regard it as virtual or symbolical.[1]

Of hymns in which the deity of Christ was proclaimed we read twice at the beginning of the second century, in the dispatch of Pliny, and early in the third, in a tract against the Artemonites.[2] Two will be found among the works of Clement of Alexandria. Bardesanes, or his son, was a copious hymn-writer, and we have remains of many Gnostic hymns. Those of Bardesanes[3] and of Clement are metrical. The others were probably all rhythmical and dogmatic, a kind of expanded doxology. Four possibly ante-Nicene hymns have been preserved: the Morning Hymn, in the *Codex Alexandrinus*, of which the first half is the *Gloria in Excelsis;* the Evening Hymn, in the *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, beginning with the words 'Praise, ye children, the Lord,' and including the *Nunc Dimittis*; a hymn for the lighting of the lamps, beginning 'O cheerful Light of holy glory'; and a hymn at mealtimes, also in the *Constitutiones.* They are very ancient, but their date cannot be at all accurately fixed.[4] Hymnology of the modern type begins to make its appearance only in the fourth century.

As to the daily life of Christians much information is to be gathered from the writings of Tertullian and Clement and from the *Canons of Hippolytus.* We read of regular prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Many rose from bed at midnight for this purpose.[5] When he awoke in the morning the Christian first washed his hands, and then said

[1] Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iv. 40 'hoc est corpus meum dicendo, id est figura corporis mei': *Verona Fragments*, pp. 112, 117; so also Clement and Origen, cf. Bigg, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 105–8, 219–21; and the *Sacramentary of Serapion* in *J. T. S.* vol. i, p. 105. Possibly even Irenaeus should be interpreted in this sense: see *Haer.* iv. 18. 5, v. 2. 3.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* v. 28. 5.

[3] See Dr. Hort's article on 'Bardaisan' in *D. C. B.*

[4] For their text see Christ und Paranikas, *Carmina Christiana*, pp. 38–40.

[5] Tert. *Ad Ux.* ii. 5.

his prayers,[1] and if he lay sleepless, he was advised to seek rest for his mind in prayer.[2] The sign of the Cross was a kind of unspoken prayer, and this was in constant use. Clement insists strongly upon moderation, self-control, courtesy, and good manners at table. In church the sexes were separated. The use of baths where men and women bathed promiscuously was strongly discouraged;[3] indeed the *Canons* teach that, after baptism, it is not necessary to wash more than the hands. Mothers were ordered to nurse their own children, and not allow them to be suckled by slave nurses.[4] It is hardly necessary to add that all Christians were strictly forbidden to visit the theatre, the circus, or the amphitheatre. This minute moral discipline was extremely necessary in those days, as it would be still in many parts of the mission field.

When a heathen applied for admission into the Church, he was questioned by the *doctor*, or catechist, as to his trade. Forbidden trades were all such as conduced to immorality or idolatry, those of the gladiator, actor, magician, usurer, incense-dealer,[5] and others of the same or a worse kind.[6] All these proscribed avocations were to be renounced absolutely and at once. If any serious hardship was entailed by the strict observance of this rule, the Church would do its best to make things easy. Thus, in the case of a man who kept a school for theatrical artists, Cyprian directed that he should be allowed a small pension till he could find some respectable means of earning his livelihood.[7] The vocations of the soldier, the schoolmaster, the magistrate, were regarded with suspicion, but as to these opinion

[1] *Canons*, p. 124. [2] Ib. p. 129.

[3] See *Didasc.* ch. 2, Mrs. Gibson's trans. Mixed baths were regarded with dislike by the better heathen, as by Hadrian, *Vita*, 18 'lavacra pro sexibus separavit'; and by Alexander Severus, *Vita*, 24 'balnea mixta Romae exhiberi prohibuit, quod quidem iam ante prohibitum Heliogabalus fieri permiserat'.

[4] *Canons*, p. 86. On the demoralizing influence of the slave nurse see my Lectures on the *Church's Task*.

[5] Incense was not used by Christians except at funerals, Tert. *De Idol.* ii, *Apol.* xlii; it was presented to the infant Jesus with myrrh and gold by the Magi as a sign that sacrifice and earthly glory were abolished by Him, *De Idol.* ix. [6] See *Canons*, p. 76 sqq. [7] *Ep.* 2.

differed. The medical art was considered blameless. The Emperor Severus employed a Christian as his court physician; the compiler of the *Didascalia* was probably a physician, and there are instances of others who practised as such before, or even after, they became bishops.[1]

Some of these rules may be regarded as expressing the ideal rather than the actual; the voice of the pulpit does not always exactly coincide with the notions of the pew. This caution seems particularly to apply to the attempts to regulate dress, especially that of ladies. This is at all times a delicate subject, not to be touched without reasonable consideration for rank, social position, and comeliness. Tertullian, who was always courageous, goes thoroughly into the matter, reveals all the mysteries of the toilette, and exaggerates in two treatises the simple general advice of St. Peter.[2] The most interesting point that he suggests is that of the veiling of women.[3]

St. Paul had ordered[4] that women should be covered in church, but did not make it perfectly clear whether he meant the rule to apply to all females or to married women only; nor, again, did he care to specify of what precise nature the covering should be. Hence there were varieties of usage. The Church of Corinth understood the Apostle to intend that all women, young or old, should wear veils during worship, and observed this as their usage. So did certain other Churches in Greece and the barbarian districts adjoining Greece. Other Churches held that the Apostle had laid no command upon girls, and left the matter to the discretion of parents. But towards the end of the second century, owing to the strong movement towards Asceticism, an effort had been made to bind the rule upon girls also. The Montanist prophetesses had received visions upon the subject, in which even the length of the veil that ought to be worn was specified. An angel had appeared to a certain sister, and slapped her upon her bare neck. Tertullian insists, therefore, that all girls of a marriageable age, that is to say above twelve years, should be covered; that a mere

[1] See *Die Syrische Didaskalia*, ed. Achelis and Flemming, p. 381.
[2] *De Cultu Fem.* [3] *De Virg. Velandis.* [4] 1 Cor. xi. 1–16.

cap, with a veil hanging down only in front and not reaching below the ears, was not sufficient; that the covering should come right down both before and behind, so low that the neck and shoulders are completely covered. Apparently he wished them to wear the veil in the street as well as in church, and even at home. The *Canons of Hippolytus* also lay down a similar rule. All marriageable young women are to wear the veil, apparently at all times, and the veil is to be 'of good thick stuff'.[1] On the other hand, Clement of Alexandria, though he teaches that a married woman ought always to be veiled except when at home,[2] says nothing about virgins.

The rule of Clement remained, that of Tertullian appears to have been found impossible to enforce. Cyprian repeats with vehemence all that the former had urged against personal decoration; ornament of any kind, he thinks, is fit only for loose women; but he does not mention the veil. From this time the veil appears as the special mark of a consecrated virgin.

The rules about dress and ornament rested mainly upon the new values set upon the virtues of modesty and chastity, but they were supported by a curious application of the Stoic rule, that life should be 'according to Nature'. This some doctors, especially Clement, took to mean that everything should be used solely for that purpose for which God designed it. Thus the use of dyes was forbidden. 'God,' says St. Cyprian,[3] 'did not make the sheep purple.' The use of bone ornaments, of ivory and tortoiseshell, was also discouraged. No trinkets were thought lawful for a man except a signet-ring, which was used for attestation of documents, and also for the greater security of locked doors, especially that of the wine-cellar. The use of cut flowers was greatly disliked. It was natural to love the sight of flowers in a meadow or a garden, but not natural to use them for the decoration of the house, or of the person. Especially garlands were on no account to be worn; indeed they were too closely connected with the worship of the heathen gods to be tolerated.

[1] *Canons*, p. 89. [2] *Paed.* ii. 7. 54; 10. 114; iii. 11. 79. [3] *De Hab. Virg.* 14.

Art, again, was regarded by the primitive Church as upon the whole a temptation, and those who have visited Pompeii or the Museum at Naples will hardly be surprised at this fact. Almost every picture, or fresco, or embroidered robe, or piece of pottery, bore some image or emblem of those gods whom the Christians regarded as wicked and noxious evil spirits. As yet the Church possessed nothing beyond the bare rudiments of an art of her own. Tertullian speaks of figures of the Good Shepherd painted or engraved upon chalices or cups.[1] Clement allowed a simple Christian emblem, a dove, a fish, a ship in full sail, a lyre, an anchor, a fisherman, to be engraved upon the signet.[2] But the richest source of information is to be found in the catacombs of Rome. The reader should consult the admirable reproductions of the frescoes given by Wilpert, and the useful manual of Lowrie.[3]

[1] *De Pud.* 7. 10.

[2] *Paed.* iii. 11. 59. For lamps ornamented with the figure of the Good Shepherd see Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, pp. 17 sq.

[3] pp. 187 sqq.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CAESARS OF THE CAMP

Severus

After the murder of Commodus a state of things arose very similar to that which followed the downfall of Nero. No one thought of avenging the last of the Antonines. Laetus and Eclectus, two of the conspirators, hastened to Pertinax, who was also suspected of complicity, made their terms with him, and hurried him off to the camp of the praetorians. The guards sullenly accepted him, the Senate, hastily convoked by night in the Temple of Concord, passed the requisite decrees in his favour, and he became Emperor.

Publius Helvius Pertinax was the grandson of a slave, and had risen to high position in the State by good service in the army. The Senate saw in him a tried and excellent official, who would restore to them that share in the government which Commodus had denied to them, and restore the settlement of Augustus; the guard, who had enjoyed the best of times under the late Emperor, regarded him with dread as a severe disciplinarian. Partly on this account, partly in revenge for the death of Commodus, partly because they had received only half of the promised donation, the praetorians murdered Pertinax after a reign of not quite three months, and sold the purple to Didius Julianus.[1]

[1] At this time the praetorian guard had ceased to be exclusively Italian: the rule was that it should be recruited from Italians, Iberians, Macedonians, and Noricans; the men from the last three districts being the handsomest and most civilized of the provincials. Severus altered this rule, and filled up the guard with picked soldiers from all the legions, whatever might be their nationality. His objects were apparently partly military, partly political; he changed the national guard into a *corps d'élite*, and at the same time put an end to the turbulent interference of the praetorians in affairs of state. But the consequence was that military power passed entirely into the hands of the provinces, and that Italians were excluded from foreign service. This was a most momentous change. See Dion Cassius, lxxiv. 2; Schiller, i, p. 706.

Naturally the powerful legions of the frontiers refused to acquiesce in the pretensions of the corrupt and unwarlike garrison of Rome. The army of the East declared in favour of the Legate of Syria, G. Pescennius Niger, that of the West put forward its own commander, Clodius Albinus, while the army of the Danube, the strongest and most warlike of all, acclaimed L. Septimius Severus, enjoining upon him to take vengeance for Pertinax, who had served with distinction among them, and for whom they cherished a high respect. Severus marched swiftly upon Rome almost unopposed, and entered the city as a conqueror with his troops in battle array. The Senate received him as master; they had already recognized the impossibility of resistance, and put Julianus to death.

Severus, born at Leptis in 146, was an African. His family had risen to equestrian dignity, but two of his father's brothers had attained to the consulate, and his mother, Fulvia, bears a noble Roman name. His family habitually talked in Punic; of his sister we are told that she could hardly make herself understood in Latin. Severus himself had literary ambitions. He went through the grammar and rhetoric schools, was well grounded in Greek and Latin, though he always spoke with a marked African accent, and went to Rome to perfect himself in oratory. He might have become a second Fronto, but his uncle, the consular Severus, took charge of his fortunes, introduced him to Marcus Aurelius, and pushed him forward in the official and military career. He always retained, or professed, a high respect for the philosophic Emperor, gave his two sons the name of Aurelius Antoninus, deified Commodus, caused his murderer, Narcissus, to be thrown to the beasts, and was buried, by his own direction, in the tomb of Marcus.[1] He deified Pertinax also,[2] for a time adopted his name, and professed himself his avenger. By these politic measures he sought to invest his own claim to the throne with a sort of hereditary and divine right.

[1] He called himself son of Marcus, Schiller, i. 715, note 5.

[2] See the remarkable account of the funeral of Pertinax in Dion Cassius, lxxiv. 4. Dion was an eyewitness, and assures his readers that when the pyre was lighted an eagle was seen to fly up out of the flame.

He was greatly addicted to astrology, in which he was esteemed an adept. He married a Syrian lady, Julia Domna, because, it is said, he had heard that her horoscope portended that she should marry a king. She was the mother of his two sons,[1] Caracalla and the ill-starred Geta. The marriage was promoted by Faustina, the empress of Marcus, who acted as bridesmaid and prepared the nuptial couch in the Temple of Venus attached to the palace,[2] probably about 175, when Marcus was in the East after the suppression of the revolt of Avidius Cassius. But in this case the story about the horoscope must be a fable, at any rate it must have been unknown to Faustina and her husband. There were reasons enough for the marriage. Julia belonged to a wealthy family of Emesa, whose heads were hereditary priests of the Sun-god. Though lax in her morals, she was clever, ambitious, and much interested in religious speculation; for her and the learned dames of her coterie Philostratus wrote his *Life of Apollonius*. It was through her influence that Sun-worship shortly afterwards became the established religion of the Empire.

On his accession Severus found himself master only of Italy and the Illyrian provinces. Albinus ruled all the Western provinces, while Byzantium and the whole East beyond the Hellespont adhered to the cause of Niger. Rome itself was not well affected to the sovereign, who had been forced upon it by the troops, and wished for the success of Niger. Severus threw himself first upon Asia, keeping Albinus quiet for a time by giving him the title of Caesar and holding out the delusive hope of a division of the Empire.[3] Niger was defeated and slain in a hard-fought and bloody

[1] Spartian, in his *Life of Severus*, 3. 20, stands alone in the statement that Caracalla was son of a former wife, Marcia, but this in all probability is an error. If true, it would help to explain the unnatural hatred of Caracalla towards his younger brother, but it makes great difficulties. The two contemporary historians, Dion Cassius and Herodian, do not mention Marcia, nor did Severus himself in his autobiography. The name of Bassianus, which was borne by Caracalla, comes from the family of Julia. Again, Caracalla was born in 188, but if he were the son of Marcia he must have been much older. See Schiller, i, p. 754, note.

[2] Dion Cassius, lxxiv. 3.

[3] Ib. lxxiii. 15; Herodian, ii. 15.

campaign, but the strong town of Byzantium held out with desperate tenacity for three years.[1] As soon as he had reconquered the East, Severus hurried to the West, where he attacked and destroyed Albinus in the vicinity of Lyons (Feb. 19, 197). The town was given over to the soldiery and treated with such barbarity that it never recovered from the blow.

Down to this time Severus had displayed the most unrelenting cruelty towards his enemies, who indeed had pushed him to the verge of destruction. He had even ventured to put many senators to death, on the ground that they had intrigued in favour of Niger or Albinus. For us the main interest in these wars of succession is that the Christians took no part in them, either in East or West. Tertullian on this ground pleads that the Emperor ought to treat them with favour, or at any rate with humanity.[2] Further, it is not improbable that St. Irenaeus perished in the sack of Lyons.

With the victorious expedition of Severus against Parthia and his other Eastern exploits, by which he was occupied for the next five years (197–202), we have little to do; but it concerns us to notice that, both in the war against Niger and in these later campaigns, Severus found the people of Palestine among his enemies. The Samaritans were among the stanchest supporters of Niger,[3] and, during the Parthian War, the Senate offered the Emperor a triumph over the Jews.[4] There must therefore have been serious fighting in Palestine.

Severus returned to Rome in 202. In the next year he built there his triumphal arch, having scornfully declined a triumph. Six years of peace ensued, when he was called into Britain, where the northern tribes had been causing serious trouble. Here he restored and strengthened the wall of Hadrian, that of Pius having apparently been given up some time before. He was still engaged in war with the Caledonians when he died at York, Feb. 4, 211, at the age of sixty-five. He had made his eldest son Caracalla co-regent

[1] It fell in 196.
[2] *Ad Scap.* 2.
[3] *Vita*, 9.
[4] *Vita*, 16.

during the war with Albinus in 198, his younger son, Geta, during the British War in 209. Thus from 209 to 211 there were three Augusti at the same time, a fact which will help us to understand the treatise of Tertullian against Praxeas. Herodian, a contemporary, speaks of Severus with an almost stupefied admiration. In military glory he thinks that Severus surpassed all previous Emperors, and his politic wisdom was such that he bequeathed to his two sons unheard-of wealth and an irresistible army. But his life was embittered and shortened by the mutual hatred of Caracalla and Geta.[1] Tertullian, another contemporary, respected him highly, calls him the most resolute of princes, and bestows high praise upon his salutary legal reforms.[2] Spartian tells us[3] that, when he was dying, he gave to the tribune on duty, as the watchword for the day, 'Work'; as Pertinax had given 'Be soldiers' and Pius 'Be calm'. Each Emperor was thought to have summed up the lesson of his life in his last command. Hard and stern as he was, Severus was beloved by the provinces, to whom his reign had been extraordinarily beneficial, and this fact accounts for the devotion with which the Easterns clung to the mere shadow of his name, to Syrian princes who were but distantly connected with him through his Syrian wife.

Severus was well acquainted with Christians and personally not ill-disposed towards them. Tertullian, who was his countryman, and regarded the African emperor with great esteem, tells us that he had once been cured of a serious disease by a Christian physician, Proculus Torpacion, whom he thenceforward kept about his own person, that he entrusted his son Caracalla to a Christian nurse, that he had protected Christian men and women of rank and borne testimony in their favour, and that he had resisted the fury of the mob when they raised an outcry against Christians.[4] Indeed Tertullian might be taken to say that during the reign of Severus there was no persecution in Africa. Of the African proconsuls about this time,[5] Tertul-

[1] iii. 3. [2] *Apol.* 4. [3] *Vita*, 23.
[4] *Ad Scap.* 4.
[5] Not all the proconsuls named by Tertullian in this passage of the *Ad*

lian states that Vespronius Candidus ordered an accused Christian to pay a fine and dismissed him. Asper, in a similar case, inflicted some slight degree of torture, and said in open court that he was sorry that the matter had been brought before him. Pudens declared that the accusation was a piece of blackmailing, tore up the indictment, and refused to entertain any similar charge, unless there was a responsible informer 'according to the law'.[1] But it seems clear that Tertullian mentions only those proconsuls of whom he could speak favourably. In the *Ad Martyres* and *Apologeticum*, both written in 197,[2] he speaks of persecution on a considerable scale as then existing, though he mentions no edict of Severus. But in the reign of Severus occurred the martyrdom of St. Perpetua and her companions, at Carthage, and on the birthday of Geta, that is to say between 198, when Geta was made Caesar, or 209, when he became Augustus, and 212, when he was murdered by his brother and his name was proscribed.[3]

The chronographer Judas, who wrote in the tenth year of Severus, 202 or 203,[4] speaks of a persecution so formidable that he regarded it as a sign of the coming of Antichrist. Clement of Alexandria also[5] speaks of martyrs 'who are seen every day before our eyes, roasted, crucified, beheaded'. It is probable that Clement wrote these words about the same date. He was himself compelled to fly for his life from Alexandria. Eusebius[6] mentions Severus without hesitation among the persecutors. In the same chapter he tells us that there were many sufferers in Egypt, including

Scapulam belong to the reign of Severus, and the dates of those who did are not quite certainly known. See Nöldechen, *Abfassungszeit der Schriften Tertullians*, pp. 11 sq.

[1] Tertullian states (*Ad Scap.* 3) that Vigellius Saturninus was the first to draw the sword against the African Church. The proconsulate of Saturninus has been set as late as 198–201, but is now known to belong to 180. See the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, ed. J. A. Robinson, in *Texts and Studies*. Scapula, a cruel persecutor, against whom Tertullian wrote, held office under Caracalla. Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 259.

[2] *Chron.* ii, p. 295.

[3] Dr. Harnack thinks (*Chron.* ii. 324) that 202 or 203 is the most probable date of the *Acta*, but any date between 198 and 212 is possible.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 7.

[5] *Strom.* ii. 20. 125.

[6] *H. E.* vi. 1. 1.

Leonides the father of Origen. In the next chapter he adds that the trouble began in the tenth year of Severus, when Laetus was governor of Egypt. A little lower down[1] he records the death of six of the pupils of Origen, and again[2] of Potamiaena, her mother Marcella, and the soldier Basilides, who commanded the detachment by which Potamiaena was guarded on her way to execution, and was converted by the sight of her fortitude. These nine met their death under Aquila, who had succeeded Laetus. Aquila actually threatened Potamiaena, who was a girl of great beauty, that if she would not recant he would give her up to the embraces of the gladiators—a hideous and illegal menace which shows the barbarity of the age and the extraordinary licence which a bad governor might allow himself. But there are many instances in which Christian women were actually subjected to this devilish form of torture.[3] There seems to have been much trouble also in Asia, but here the dates are less certain. The learned Alexander,[4] who became bishop of Aelia, or Jerusalem, in 212, had previously been bishop of some Church in Cappadocia, and had suffered imprisonment, possibly in the persecution instituted by L. Claudius Herminianus, who was provoked by the conversion of his wife.[5] Asclepiades, also, who succeeded Serapion in the bishopric of Antioch in 211, had been a confessor.[6] The heretic Theodotus of Byzantium had been denounced as a Christian before the governor of that city, fled to Rome, and was excommunicated by Victor, who was Pope as late as 198 or 199.[7]

[1] vi. 4. [2] vi. 5.

[3] See them collected in Mommsen's *Strafrecht*, p. 955. As it was, Aquila merely killed her by pouring boiling pitch over her body. Palladius (*Hist. Laus.* 3) gives an account of Potamiaena which differs from that of Eusebius in some particulars, notably in the date of the martyrdom, which he places under Maximian (Maximin?). In the date Palladius is no doubt wrong, but he may be right in stating that she was a slave, and that she was denounced by her master because she refused to listen to his solicitations. She was certainly an Egyptian, not a Greek: see Eus. *H. E.* vi. 5. 1. Aquila would hardly have dared to treat a woman of the dominant race in this fashion.

[4] See on him Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* ii. 165; *Gesch. d. altchristl. Litt.* ii. 505; *Chron.* ii. 92; Bardenhewer, ii. 228.

[5] Tert. *Ad Scap.* 3. [6] *Chron.* i, p. 726; Eus. *H. E.* vi. 11.

[7] The Byzantine governor may have been that Caecilius Capella who was

There is, then, evidence of a persecution all through the reign of Severus, but especially in the first decade of the third century.

But there is a serious question whether Severus issued any edict of his own against the Church. The jurist Paullus tells us[1] of a law that any Roman citizen who allowed himself or his slaves to be circumcised, should lose his property and be banished for life; the surgeon was to be put to death. Further, any Jew who bought a Gentile slave and circumcised him was liable to exile or execution. Paullus does not ascribe this enactment to Severus, indeed it appears to be in substance identical with an older law attributed to Antoninus Pius.[2] But the law of Pius may have fallen into disuse and been revived by Severus. There is a curious story that Caracalla,[3] when seven years old, that is to say in 195, saw one of his playmates cruelly flogged 'on account of the Jewish religion'. For some time Caracalla would not speak either to Severus or to the boy's father, by whom the scourging had been inflicted. The boy in question would seem to have been a convert. Severus would not be inclined to relax the old law in favour of the Jews, who had strongly espoused the cause of Niger.

Tertullian, a contemporary, does not speak of any express antichristian pronouncements of Severus. But Spartian, writing under Diocletian, nearly a century later, tells us[4] that during the Parthian War Severus promulgated an edict[5] in which he forbade his subjects to become Jews; and extended this prohibition also to Christians. The first clause merely repeats the law of Pius, but the second, if genuine, is a striking innovation. On the one side it would be a remarkable act of clemency; those who were born Christians were not to be molested. On the other it would be extraordinarily hard and extremely illogical; all con-

an active enemy of Christianity; Tert. *Ad Scap.* 3; Eusebius, *H. E.* v. 28. 6; Epiph. *Haer.* 54. Byzantium came into the hands of Severus in 196.

[1] *Sent.* v. 22, in Huschke, *Jur. Antejust. Rell.*

[2] *Digest*, 48. 8, 11. See also Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, p. 638.

[3] *Vita*, 1.

[4] *Vita Severi*, 17.

[5] Spartian may mean that there were two edicts, one against Jews, another against Christians.

verts were to suffer the usual punishment, yet they were no more Caesar's enemies than other Christians. In fact many of those whom we know to have endured martyrdom in the reign of Severus were either proselytes or teachers, but our information is not sufficient to say that all were. Upon the whole it must remain doubtful whether Severus issued any directions at all, and it is not impossible that the persecution, which undoubtedly occurred in his reign, was the act of the provincial governors. Yet we know that Severus prided himself on following the policy of Marcus, and as two successive prefects of Egypt, Laetus and Aquila, both persecuted, he must have sanctioned their conduct.

Severus was a harsh man, who thought very little of human life when his aims were crossed. But he was also a politic man, certainly not tender-hearted, but not needlessly cruel. He knew and esteemed many members of the Church. His own religious views were probably as modern and as cosmopolitan as those of Julia Domna. An African with a Syrian wife could care very little for the gods of Rome or Greece, and, if he had a preference at all, it seems to have been for the gods of Egypt.[1] The paganism of the third century, with its growing devotion to the Eastern sun-worship, was a wholly different thing from that of the second. Severus was no fanatic, and Christianity was already so strong among the nobility and the army—it is noteworthy that Basilides is the first military martyr on record—that it may have seemed to him impossible to treat it as a thing to be rooted out. Yet he may have thought that it might be and ought to be isolated and shut up, as it were, in an infectious hospital. But, if this really was the policy of Severus, the results showed that half-toleration is as bad as no toleration at all. It was impossible to dam the flowing tide; and the wicked old game of torture, confiscation, beheading, crucifying, and throwing to the beasts, went on for some years as briskly as under Marcus Aurelius.

The chief scene of suffering appears to have been Egypt. The position of this country among the provinces of the

[1] *Vita*, 17.

Empire was quite unique. It was treated as a closed preserve belonging to Caesar himself. No senator was allowed to set foot within it; the prefect or viceroy was always selected from among the knights, a body of men whose devotion to their master could be far more securely relied upon than that of the nobles. The internal administration of the country was different from that of the provinces; in particular there were no town councils and there was no *commune* or parliament. The cause for this peculiarity was partly historical; the government was a continuation of the old autocracy of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies, but there were special reasons why the usual Roman policy, of fostering as far as possible local institutions and municipal life, was not observed in the land of the Nile. On the one hand the secure possession of Egypt was of vital consequence to the Emperor personally. From it was derived a third of the supply of corn which was necessary for the daily subsistence of the city of Rome. From it again the Emperor drew a large income in money, which made his financial resources greatly superior to those of the Senate or of any possible rival. On the other hand the population was divided between privileged Greeks and non-privileged natives, who were not inclined to amalgamate and not encouraged to do so, bitterly jealous of one another, fanatical and turbulent.[1] It was therefore eminently desirable to seal the province up, and guard it as effectually as possible from every influence that might provoke an outbreak of disorder. But in the time of Severus great excitement must have been produced by the success of the missionary propaganda emanating from the Alexandrian school, directed as it had been by the learned Pantaenus and Clement, and as it was now by the abler and more fiery Origen. It is singular that there should have been no persecution in Egypt before. Christianity had long existed in the country, at any rate in Alexandria,[2] but it cannot have been so self-confident and aggressive as it now became.

The persecution of Laetus broke out in the tenth year of

[1] For all this see Mommsen, *Provinces of the Empire*, vol. ii, pp. 233 foll., E. T.

[2] Harnack, *Mission*, pp. 410, 412.

Severus (A. D. 202), and appears to have been directed chiefly against native Egyptians; at any rate the very numerous martyrs mentioned by Clement came from 'Egypt and the Thebaid'; they were brought down country for trial before the prefect in Alexandria. Among the sufferers was Leonides, the father of Origen.[1] Origen himself was then a mere boy,[2] or, to speak more precisely, was sixteen years old.[3] The property of Leonides was confiscated, according to the regular practice, upon his conviction, and Origen was left with his mother and six younger brothers and sisters in a state of utter destitution. The family appear to have been provided for by the charity of the Christian community; Origen himself was taken into the house of a wealthy lady.

She must have been a good woman, liberal both in purse and mind. She had a high esteem for one Paul, an Antiochene, a Gnostic of considerable repute; and a Church was held in her house, presided over by Paul, and attended by large numbers both of Gnostics and of Catholics. We must infer that the relations between the Church and the Gnostics at Alexandria were by no means so hostile as in Italy and in Gaul. The systems of Basilides and Valentinus found wide acceptance in Egypt, especially among the native population, the Gospel according to the Egyptians was accepted there with little doubt down to the end of the second century,[4] and in the papyri and in the Hermetic *Poemander* we find ample evidence of the blending in varying degrees of Christianity, Gnosticism, and homebred Egyptian beliefs.[5] But about this time, probably on the

[1] Origen, according to Epiphanius (*Haer.* 64. 1), was an Egyptian, that is to say a native, not a Greek. His father was apparently settled in Alexandria, but neither this fact nor the names of Leonides and Origen, of which the first is pure Greek, the second, Son of Hor, is Graecized Egyptian, are decisive. Leonides was beheaded, not burnt, and this may imply that he belonged to the privileged class of Greeks.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 2. 3.

[3] *H. E.* vi. 2. 12.

[4] Harnack, *Mission*, p. 448.

[5] Among the papyri have been discovered a number of interesting but singular pieces, the so-called *Logia Iesu*, Gospel fragments, &c. They probably belong either to Gnostics proper, or to that circle—it may have been a large circle—which stood upon the ill-defined borderland between the orthodox Church and the sectaries.

elevation of Demetrius, the episcopate was remodelled and invested with the character which it had already assumed elsewhere, and much stricter opinions were beginning to assume the upper hand. Origen himself had been trained from the first in the exclusive path of orthodoxy, and absolutely refused to attend the church of his patroness. Probably he quitted her abode, for he began at once to earn his own living by keeping a grammar-school.[1]

The Catechetical School proper was at the time in abeyance. Since the flight of Clement the bishop had not dared to make a new appointment, and those who would have otherwise gone to that institution to study the Christian problem turned to the private academy of Origen, among them Plutarchus the martyr and Heraclas who succeeded Demetrius in the bishopric of Alexandria. But, about a year after the persecution of Laetus, Demetrius judged it safe to revive the Catechetical School, and appointed Origen, then not quite eighteen years old, as its new chief. Shortly afterwards broke out the renewed persecution under Aquila, perhaps in the year 204, in which Severus celebrated the Secular Games. Origen met the danger with the most audacious intrepidity. He visited the confessors in prison, stood by them in court, and openly gave them the kiss of peace. The mob were naturally infuriated against him, and the governor went so far as to set a guard of soldiers about his class-room. But these police had no orders to break in, and he was not arrested. He even found it possible to carry on his duties, and not only to keep together but to increase his large band of pupils; so much so that he was obliged to engage an assistant tutor, to whom he committed the charge of the lower or grammatical class, in order that he might devote himself without interruption to the teaching of philosophy and theology. It is a very singular story. The government cannot really have been anxious to effect his capture. We may suppose that the sufferers under Laetus were mainly Egyptians, a despised race, for whom nobody much cared, while those under Aquila mainly belonged to the Greek aristocracy, a favoured class who were not liable

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 2. 15.

to the same punishments as the natives; indeed the difference between the two races was as great as that between Anglo-Normans and Celts in the Ireland of Queen Elizabeth's time. The governor may well have thought it dangerous to bear too hardly upon the dominant race.[1] There is a remarkable phrase in the account of Eusebius[2] which may supply another reason for Aquila's caution. Origen accompanied his friend Plutarch on the way to execution, and hardly escaped misusage from the bystanders, who were greatly incensed against him, as the cause of Plutarch's death. Were these angry people heathen friends of Plutarch? or were they Christians who looked upon this fiery young teacher as a dangerous fanatic likely to bring them all into peril of their lives? In the former case the scene is intelligible enough. The question recurs how Origen himself managed to escape death, but we can well understand that Aquila would anxiously desire not needlessly to provoke such exhibitions of sympathy with the hard fate of well-known Greeks. On the latter supposition the prefect may have felt that the upper class needed no more lessons, since it seemed evident that such of them as were Christians were willing enough to conform as far as it was possible for them to do so.

There was much persecution, also, as has been said, in Africa. Here we find Tertullian, who was, like Origen, a fiery advocate of martyrdom, and, like Origen again, escaped personal suffering, though, unlike Origen, he was a convert. We have observed Tertullian's attestation of the fact that there were martyrs in Africa as early as 197. It is singular that he does not mention in the *Ad Scapulam*[3] a most

[1] It may be possible to distinguish the nationality of the victims by the nature of the punishment inflicted. Leonides, the father of Origen, was beheaded by Laetus. Of those who were put to death by Aquila Plutarch was probably beheaded, as were certainly Heraclides and Heron, and one Serenus. The other Serenus and Herais were burnt. Potamiaena, who was treated with such barbarity, was a native; Basilides the soldier was beheaded. The axe was for the superior race, the fire for the inferior.

[2] *H. E.* vi. 4. 1.

[3] He refers to the vision of Perpetua in *De Anima*, 55, but in words which are exactly true not of her vision, but of that of Saturus. The Dean of Westminster, who has done so much for these beautiful *Acta*, thinks that

interesting group of martyrs whose death fell within the period of which he is there speaking, for whose opinions he must have felt a peculiar sympathy, and whose *Acta* is among the most admirable pieces of martyrology. These were Perpetua and Felicitas with their companions. Vibia Perpetua was a young married woman, of good social position and education (she could speak Greek). Felicitas was a slave, as was Revocatus, who may have been her husband. Of Saturninus and Secundulus we know nothing but the names, and that, like their comrades, they were quite young. Saturus was a priest who had been instrumental in the conversion of the whole company, and gave himself up that he might accompany his children in God through the valley of death.[1] The *Acta* falls into three parts, one written by Perpetua, another by Saturus, another by the unknown editor who added certain passages at the beginning and at the end.[2]

Perpetua tells us how, when first she was taken from home in custody of the police, her father came urging her to recant with prayers, and when prayers did not avail, with fury, rushing upon her 'as if he would tear her eyes out'. Shortly after the whole party were baptized, but Perpetua was admonished by the Holy Spirit that she must expect from the water nothing but the power to endure. After another few days they were all cast into prison, into the inner dungeon, where there was hardly a ray of light. 'And I was terrified,' she says, 'for I had never seen such darkness.' A throng of people had crowded after the martyrs into the narrow room, the heat was stifling, and her

the editor was Tertullian. But Tertullian cited them incorrectly. Further, the editor knew Perpetua well, and wrote his part of the *Acta* by her special request—'quasi mandatum, immo fidei commissum eius'. We should expect therefore to meet with his name in the *Acta*. A fair guess would be that the editor was one of the deacons who visited the martyrs in the prison. See the edition of Dr. Armitage Robinson, and Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 321 sqq.

[1] There were other martyrs in this same persecution whose names occur in the *Acta*—Jocundus, another Saturninus, and Artaxius had been burnt alive, Quintus had died in prison. Probably these had been condemned by Timinianus.

[2] Chaps. i and ii forming a Preface, Chaps. xv–xxi containing the story of Felicitas, and the account of the final scene.

ears were deafened by the loud demands of the jailers for garnish; further, her heart was torn by anxiety for her little infant. But Tertius and Pomponius, two deacons of the Church, had been told off to make arrangements for the prisoners' comfort; they paid the usual fees, got the martyrs removed into a better room, and even contrived to obtain permission for Perpetua to suckle her baby. 'Then,' she says, 'the prison became a palace, so that I would rather be there than anywhere else.'

Here we come to the first of her visions. Her brother (he was a catechumen but had not yet been denounced) begged her to ask for a revelation whether her trial would end in acquittal or in death. In the night she dreamed and saw a high narrow ladder set with swords and knives: beneath it couched a great dragon to frighten away all who would ascend. Saturus climbed first, reached the top, then turned and called to her, 'Perpetua, I await thee; but see lest the dragon bite thee.' She set her foot upon the monster's head, went boldly up, and found a great garden, where was a man of marvellous stature, white haired, and garbed as a shepherd, milking his ewes. Round him were many thousands of people dressed in white apparel. He said to her, 'Welcome, my child,' called her to him, and gave her a morsel of cheese. She took it in her joined hands and ate it; as she did so there was a loud cry of Amen, which woke her from her sleep. This she recounted to her brother, accepting it as a warning that no hope was left for her in this world.[1]

A few days after Perpetua was again visited by her father,[2] who renewed his attempt to shake her purpose,

[1] There is no doubt a reference to the Eucharist, which Perpetua must have received for the first time a few days before. The cheese represents the bread in conformity with the scene. There is no need to drag in the Artotyritae. The 'joined hands' are not clasped in prayer—it was the custom to pray with hands outstretched—but laid one upon the other, or placed side by side so as to form a cup for the reception of the shepherd's gift.

[2] It is possible that she was not a Carthaginian and had been arrested in some country town. In Chap. v we read 'supervenit autem et de civitate pater meus consumptus taedio', which in the Greek text is expressed *παρεγένετο δὲ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐκ τῆς πολλῆς ἀποδημίας μαραινόμενος*. This would account for the

pleading his singular love for her above all his children, kissing her hands, throwing himself at her feet, calling her 'my lady', and urging passionately the disgrace and ruin which her execution would bring upon all her family. 'I grieved for him,' she says, 'because he was the only one of all my race who would not rejoice over my passion.' The complaint can hardly be strictly just, for one of her brothers was a catechumen, and her mother had come to weep over her in the prison. But where was her husband—that well-to-do gentleman to whom she had been married apparently little more than a year? He is never mentioned, and would seem to have left her to her doom without a pang. Perpetua speaks with bitterness, perhaps not wholly deserved. But what a terrible glimpse we have here into the domestic unhappiness occasioned by every one of these conversions and denunciations.[1]

Shortly after this the martyrs were called away from their breakfast to stand their trial in the Forum in the midst of a great concourse. Their imprisonment seems to have been unusually protracted by reason of the sickness and death of the proconsul Minucius Timinianus. The officer before whom they were brought for judgement was Hilarianus,[2] the imperial procurator, who had been invested with the *ius gladii* until a new proconsul could be sent from Rome. The prisoners were placed upon the *catasta* or platform, asked a few brief questions, ordered to do sacrifice 'for the safety of the Emperors', and on their refusal condemned to be thrown to the beasts.[3] The birthday of Geta was at hand, and materials for a handsome show were urgently needed. Then Perpetua's father made another

time that elapsed before she and her companions were lodged in the jail at Carthage. The Greek text says, Chap. ii, that they were brought from the lesser Thuburbo, which may be right, though the Thuburbitan Martyrs were quite different persons of much later date. See the Dean of Westminster's Introduction to the *Acta*, p. 22 sqq.

[1] Among the Fayum papyri is one containing a curse pronounced by a pagan mother upon her son who had become a Christian, solemnly cutting him off from kith and kin (*Transactions of Society of Biblical Archaeology for* 1884, part 1).

[2] He is mentioned by Tertullian, *Ad Scap.* 3.

[3] Their refusal was accepted as final, and they were not put to the torture.

effort. He appeared with her child in his arms. Hilarianus seconded his appeal—Perpetua was one of the *honestiores*, to whom special consideration was due—but, seeing that she was quite resolved, sentenced her with the rest, and, when the old man even then would not cease his lamentable cries, ordered him to be thrown upon the ground and beaten with the rod.

After condemnation Perpetua saw yet other visions. In one she was encouraged to pray for her little brother Dinocrates, who had died unbaptized and was in torment. She beheld him across a wide gulf, standing on tiptoe in the vain effort to drink water from a fountain which was too high for him. Day after day she repeated her intercession, till at last she was rewarded by another vision. The fountain was no longer higher than the child's waist; on its margin was a golden vial full of water, from which Dinocrates drank eagerly. The draught appeared to fill him with strength and joy, so that he began to play 'as infants do'. 'Then,' she says, 'I understood that he was released from punishment.'[1]

Shortly after their condemnation the martyrs were transferred from the town prison into that of the camp, which was hard by the military amphitheatre where they were to suffer. Here Perpetua had another vision assuring her of victory in the coming struggle. Saturus also had a revelation which he wrote down with his own hand, in which he beheld himself and his comrades amid the joys of Paradise. Here also Felicitas was prematurely delivered of a child. When she cried out in her pangs the rough jailers asked her how she could face the beasts, if she found the pains of maternity so hard to bear. She replied, 'Now I am suffering what I suffer; then Another will be in me who will suffer for me, as I shall suffer for Him.' We may place Felicitas by the side of Blandina, the slave girl who was martyred at Lyons.

In their new prison a tribune of the legion ordered that the prisoners should be treated with great severity, because

[1] Compare the story of St. Gregory's prayer for Trajan. Perpetua's prayer was equally unconventional. Prayer for the dead was a recognized practice, as we know from Tertullian; but there were clearly some who believed that even the dead heathen might be helped by a Christian's prayers.

he had been warned that Christians were all magicians, who could slip through his chains and bars with perfect ease. Perpetua remonstrated with him, and, to his credit, he gave way, ordering that the captives should be humanely used and not prevented from receiving the visits of their friends. The day before the execution the martyrs received the indulgence commonly awarded to the condemned known as the *coena libera*, a last meal at which they could order whatever viands they pleased. At this tragic banquet sightseers from without were freely admitted as to a spectacle. Saturus used the opportunity to preach the gaping throng a stern sermon on their idle curiosity and the judgement of God. 'Mark well our features,' he said, 'that you may know us again in that day.' Many of these intruders, adds the editor, were converted. They would be mainly soldiers from the camp. Thus it was that the blood of the martyrs became a seed.

As to the final scene we need notice only a few points of peculiar interest.

At the gate of the amphitheatre the guards began to dress the prisoners up, the men as priests of Saturn, the women as priestesses of Ceres. The high-spirited Perpetua again protested; the tribune again allowed her protest, and directed that the martyrs should enter the arena in their own garb.

Again the sufferings, especially of the women, evoked a certain manifestation of commiseration among the spectators. There were cries that Perpetua and Felicitas, after they had been hurt but not killed by the beasts, should be sent back to the Porta Sanavivaria. Perhaps this was only meant for a respite, but the people[1] seem to have been half-minded to spare their lives. Others also were allowed, after a bout with the beasts, to go and rest for a while in one of the gateways where their friends could go and talk to them. In one such breathing space Saturus found by his side Pudens, who had been the sub-officer in charge of the prison, and had showed all the kindness he could to his captives. Saturus, who was bathed in blood, having been

[1] These again would be mainly soldiers.

mauled by a leopard, drew a ring from his finger, dipped it in his wounds, and gave it to Pudens as a keepsake. It is evident that these spectacles were becoming highly dangerous to the government.

At last the sufferers were all down, though not yet dead, and their bodies were dragged aside and laid in a row for the *confector* to give them the *coup de grace* with his sword. The people insisted that they should be killed in the middle of the arena where all could see. The martyrs struggled to their feet, went to the spot directed, kissed one another, and received the fatal stab in silence, all except Perpetua. The young gladiator appointed to dispatch her made a clumsy thrust; she uttered one cry, put up her hand, and guided the blade to her neck, high-souled and dauntless to the last.

There are many features in the *Acta* which show that these martyrs were Montanists.[1] Yet they were not schismatic. At any rate they felt a sufficient interest in the bishop or 'pope' Optatus, and in Aspasius the *presbyter doctor*, to send them from prison a severe rebuke for the lax discipline which they permitted to exist in the Church. It may be doubted whether in Africa the Montanists ever broke completely away, in spite of the fierce language which Tertullian hurled against the *psychici*.

[1] These Montanist features have been considerably softened in the Greek and in the later Latin editions. See Dr. Armitage Robinson, pp. 6, 52.

CHAPTER XXII

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY UNDER SEVERUS

In the first century after Christ the most notable school of philosophy was the Stoic. In the second Platonism, not always quite undiluted, became ascendant. Both had a strongly religious tinge, and both looked for truth within, in man's intelligence. Neither broke away absolutely from the popular belief, but both made some not inconsiderable protest against the worst forms of polytheistic ritualism and superstition. All religious philosophies must make some attempt to strike a balance between Individualism and Socialism. All pagan systems, being strongly intellectual, inclined in the former direction, Stoicism much more so than Platonism. But in the second century the tide ran in the other direction; the provinces were rapidly rising to complete political equality with Italy, and were beginning to feel the need of a world-wide unity, superseding all the old national distinctions. Hence Stoicism was bound to go down before its humaner rival. In the first century the Stoic regarded Caesar as the incarnation of evil, was oligarchic in his view of the State, preached suicide, spoke with the bitterest scorn of women and children; in the second Plutarch the Platonist looks upon the Emperor as the natural and generally beneficent head of the civilized world, speaks of marriage as a religious man should, and of women like a gentleman. The Platonist disliked suicide; Artemidorus, in the age of the Antonines, tells us that it was looked upon by people generally as infamous. The Stoic again was always at bottom an agnostic, speaking of God and immortality at best with an emphatic perhaps: the Platonist built his whole system on the fatherhood of God and the future life of the soul, and regarded Agnosticism as destroying the very foundations of morality.

Among ordinary people the two last-named articles were very generally believed—a fact which explains the great popularity of the Mysteries, especially those of Isis and Mithra, in the second century, and probably accounts also for the preference of interment by cremation, to which Artemidorus testifies. Further, these same ordinary people were growing alive to the sense of spiritual disquiet, and groping about for some kind of Saviour, for some kind of expiation, for a sacrifice to which a spiritual meaning could be attached, for an authoritative moral rule and for a brotherhood, expressed not in abstract formulas but in living examples and in definite actions. All these things they found in the Mysteries more or less, and to some limited degree in Platonism. But even Platonism did not realize the popular ideal with sufficient force and vitality. Hence about the end of the second century we find a sudden revival of an ancient mode of the religious life, the Pythagorean, which, blended with current Platonism, finally brought forth what we know as Neoplatonism.

Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, was a famous religious teacher who flourished in the sixth century before Christ. He left no writings,[1] and we know hardly anything with certainty of the details of his history. All that we can affirm with tolerable confidence is that he was born in Samos, travelled in the East, and settled finally in Magna Graecia; that he discovered a religious system in the laws of numbers, especially as exemplified in the science of music; that he taught an authoritative code of morality based upon the doctrines of the immortality and transmigration of the soul, and founded a brotherhood or Church, which for some time was very powerful in the city of his adoption, Croton in Southern Italy. There he created a passionate moral reformation, not unlike that produced by the teaching of Savonarola in Florence. 'Incontinence disappeared, luxury became discredited, and women hastened to exchange their golden ornaments for the simplest

[1] Diogenes Laertius tells us that Philolaus, one of the teachers of Plato, was the first to commit the doctrines of Pythagoras to writing (viii. 7).

attire.'[1] Partly because of its puritanism, partly because it got entangled in the furious parochial politics which raged in the little Greek republics, this interesting sect was almost exterminated in a bloody tumult.

But it maintained a quiet unobtrusive life among the religious Greeks. Herodotus regards the Pythagoreans as closely connected, if not identical, with the devotees of Orpheus, and tells us that they resembled in some points the Egyptian priests, especially in wearing garments of linen, not of wool, from some mystic dread of animal pollution.[2] The Hippolytus of Euripides lives in virgin chastity and eats no flesh, because he takes Orpheus for his king. A little later the comic poet Alexis adds another trait. The Pythagoreans, he tells us, drink no wine.[3]

Pythagoreanism, with its mystical love of numbers, exercised a considerable influence upon the mind of Plato, and attracted the attention of Aristotle, who wrote a treatise upon it, often refers to it in his extant works,[4] but did not regard it with favour. In the second century B. C. it was not improbably one of the causes that produced Essenism in Judaea.[5] A little later it gave birth to a number of apocryphal documents, attributed to Pythagoras himself, or to members of his family, or to the famous old mathematician Archytas. To this group of writings belong the *Golden Verses*, a brief collection of moral precepts in seventy-one hexameter lines, and the quaint philosophical treatise of Ocellus Lucanus. In the first century B. C. Pythagoreanism invaded Rome, where it was known to Cicero and Varro, and expounded by the learned Alexander Polyhistor.[6]

[1] Grote, iv. 541. [2] ii. 81; cp. iv. 94, 95.

[3] Probably all these traits belong to the later Pythagoreans, not quite strictly to the master himself. At any rate Diogenes had read that Pythagoras drank wine, though not during the day, and that he dressed in white woollen raiment, because linen was at the time unknown in South Italy. Even as to his abstinence from flesh there was not complete agreement. The asceticism of the sect seems to have gradually become more severe, and to have varied in individuals.

[4] See the Index of Bonitz. [5] See Schürer, ii. 583.

[6] See Müller, *Fragmenta Hist. Graec.* iii, p. 240; Diogenes Laertius, viii. 17 sqq.

During the first two centuries of the Christian era we hear next to nothing of Pythagoreanism, though no doubt it was alive. But some time about the turning-point of the second and third centuries Diogenes Laertius wrote his *Life of Pythagoras*. He wrote it for a lady of rank, who was interested in philosophy, especially in that of Plato.[1] She may possibly have been Julia Domna.[2] Diogenes was learned, and had ransacked Greek literature for information, but the Pythagorean myth had expanded amazingly in his time, and we cannot always tell when he is following the oldest and best authorities, and when he is giving the beliefs of later members of the sect.

One peculiarity of the Pythagoreans, and probably of Pythagoras himself, was the love of 'symbols' or brief enigmatical apophthegms—do not poke the fire with a sword, do not leap over the steelyard, keep your bedding always packed up, do not look back upon a journey, do not suffer swallows to nest under your roof, and so on—quaint archaic proverbs intended to be learned by heart, and inculcating moderation in anger, reverence for justice, readiness to depart when God calls, fixity of purpose, and suspicion of the inconstant. These riddles Pythagoras is said to have used as a test of the intelligence and earnestness of a new disciple; as Mahinda, the Buddhist Apostle, tried the Cingalese King Tissa with his puzzle about the mango-tree.[3]

Pythagoras is said to have taught his disciples every evening, when they came back home, to ask themselves: What have I done amiss? What duty have I performed? What have I left undone? Not to offer victims to the gods, but to worship only at bloodless altars; not to swear by the gods, but to live so that all men would believe their word; to revere elders, to honour gods before demons, heroes before men, and parents before all other men. To live so with one another as to make friends of enemies, and never to make

[1] iii. 47.

[2] There was a great number of *Lives of Pythagoras*: the two by Porphyry and Iamblichus are later than that of Diogenes, and of little or no historical value.

[3] Copleston's *Buddhism*, p. 317.

enemies of friends. To call nothing their own; to support the law, and make war upon lawless men. To destroy no cultivated plant, nor any beast that is not hurtful to man. That modesty and discretion agree neither with uproarious laughter nor with a sullen face. To avoid fullness of flesh; to practise the memory; neither to say nor do anything in a passion; to respect all kinds of augury; to sing to the lyre only hymns to the gods, and to cherish a grateful remembrance of good men.

He is said also to have laid down rules as to clean and unclean meats, forbidding especially the eating of beans, which he regarded as in some way animate. So much for his moral teaching, which, if not actually his own, was at any rate observed by his followers.[1]

As to theology the teaching ascribed to Pythagoras is a kind of Pantheism. The Supreme God is the Absolute One, from which is evolved the Dyad or Two which is Matter. From these spring the other numbers, and from these points, lines, surfaces, and solids. The mystical meanings attached to numbers by Plato, and even by the Fathers of the Church, often strike us as childish. But we may observe that in the Pythagorean scheme number means physical law, which indeed can often be expressed in arithmetical terms. The great Descartes built his theory of nature upon mathematics. Further, we may add that this part of Pythagoreanism found its way into the Bible. In the Wisdom of Solomon[2] we read that God ordered all things 'by measure, and number, and weight', a verse from which Origen deduced important theological conclusions. Nevertheless the Pythagoreans found a means for reconciling their pantheism with the vulgar polytheism. We have seen that with the One they worshipped also the gods, the demons, and the heroes.

By his wisdom, his asceticism, and his contact with inspired nations, Thracians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Magi (Porphyry adds *Hebrews*), Pythagoras was believed to have

[1] Diogenes is here following Alexander Polyhistor, and says that the account agrees with that of Aristotle.

[2] xi. 20.

attained to supernatural powers. The belief was held by his followers at a very early date, for Hermippus about the middle of the third century B. C. treated him as an impostor on this account. It is therefore important to notice what kind of miracles were attributed to him, and at what date. Diogenes tells us that he had received from Mercury the gift of recollecting what had happened to him in his previous lives. Hence he was able to tell how he had once been Aethalides, then Euphorbus in the time of the Trojan War, then Hermotimus, then Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos, and finally Pythagoras. He had a golden thigh. He descended into Hades and there saw the souls of Hesiod and Homer suffering torments for their calumnies against the gods, and once when he was crossing the Nessus a voice from the river saluted him by name, 'Hail, Pythagoras.' These are all the miracles attributed to the sage down to the time of Diogenes, and it is to be noticed that they are not in the least like the miracles of the New Testament. But if we turn to the later biographer we learn that Pythagoras was son, not of Mnesarchus, but of Apollo and Parthenis, the 'virgin mother';[1] that once, when he had been praying on Mount Carmel, the sailors, waiting for him in a boat below, saw him come back to them floating on the air over rocks and precipices; that he caused a miraculous draught of fishes, by which many were converted, cured disease, and

[1] Porphyry tells us that 'some' asserted that Pythagoras was son of Apollo and Pythais, on the authority of an unnamed Samian poet. Iamblichus says that Mnesarchus, father of Pythagoras, was descended from Ancaeus, son of Jove, the hero founder of Samos. Iamblichus quotes this same poet, and goes on to say that Pythais was renamed Parthenis by her husband; that Epimenides, Eudoxus, and Zenocrates made Pythagoras son of Apollo and Parthenis; that they are not to be believed: at the same time that no one who considers his pedigree or his wisdom can doubt that the soul of Pythagoras belonged to the realm of Apollo, or was his companion, or in some closer way still was allied to this god. Miraculous birth was ascribed to Plato also, on the authority of his nephew Speusippus, but the particular treatise in which Speusippus is affirmed to have made this statement does not appear in the list of his works as given by Diogenes Laertius. It is probable that all these myths belong to the first, or even to the second, century after Christ; and that the ancient writers appealed to in support of them are falsely cited. Whether they are imitations of the history of the Nativity is not certain, but it may be suspected that they are.

fasted for forty days. We may detect here with great confidence echoes of the Gospel narrative, adapted by Iamblichus with a controversial purpose. But even in the time of Severus the same trick is played even more openly by Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius.*

This book was published in the reign of Severus, about the same time as the Laertian *Life of Pythagoras.* It was written by royal command. The Empress Julia Domna, like many famous Parisian dames of the eighteenth century, presided over a *salon*, or literary circle, which was devoted to the study of rhetoric. Rhetoric at the time is to be understood as meaning, as it did in Paris, the art of refined conversation, including all subjects of intellectual interest, and in particular the relations between religion and philosophy. Julia had heard at one of her conferences of the existence of a kind of gospel attributed to one Damis of Ninus, or Nineveh, who professed to have been a disciple or apostle of Apollonius, and had composed a clear but inartistic sketch of the opinions, the sayings, and the prophecies of his master. This she directed Philostratus to put into a fitting literary shape. Philostratus undertook the commission, combined with the narrative of Damis a book in which one Maximus had described the earlier ministry of Apollonius at Aegae, the 'testament', and letters of Apollonius himself, and so produced his *Life.* Damis is certainly a fictitious person, and Ninus or Nineveh, where he is said to have lived, was then as now a mere heap of ruins. Maximus of Aegae is nothing but a name. Letters of Apollonius still exist, but may safely be regarded as spurious. Eusebius quotes a work *On Sacrifices* as by Apollonius; but the book appears to have been unknown to Philostratus;[1] and a saying of Apollonius is quoted by Epictetus, a contemporary.

Apollonius was undoubtedly a real personage, who flourished in the time of Vespasian, and is said to have lived to a great age, dying about 98 A. D. In his own time he appears to have attracted little attention, and that little

[1] Indeed, Eusebius himself does not vouch for its authenticity; see *Praep. Evang.* iv. 12.

was not always favourable. One Moeragenes wrote four books about him, and seems to have treated him as an impostor, as Pythagoras was treated by Hermippus, and, late in the second century, Alexander by Lucian. The *Life* can only be regarded as a romance. Yet it has a high interest as a semi-official religious manifesto, and explains, better than any other book, that neo-paganism which was supplanting the barren old popular beliefs.

The theology of Apollonius is the same as that of the Pythagoreans, though, like all the philosophers of the first century, he gives hardly a hint of the scientific basis upon which it was erected. It is, however, pretty clearly explained in the passage given by Eusebius, which may be translated here; for, though the book *On Sacrifices* is of doubtful authenticity, it agrees in substance with the *Life*, and represents accurately the Apollonian myth.

'If a man wishes to pay fitting service to the Deity, and by that means to be singled out as an object of divine grace and goodness, he must offer to that God whom we called the First, who is One and above all, after whom only can the other deities be recognized, no sacrifice at all; he must kindle no fire, nor promise any earthly thing. For God needs nothing, not even from beings that are higher than we; nor is there any plant, any creature, produced or nourished by earth or air, which is free from pollution. To Him man must offer only the better word, I mean that which is not uttered by the lips, and ask good things from the most beautiful of all, by the most beautiful faculty that we possess. This faculty is intelligence, which needs no organ. Therefore to the great and supreme God no sacrifices at all must be offered.' [1]

Eusebius is desirous to show how the ancient religious philosophers paved the way for the Gospel, and it is evident how they did so, both by their strength and by their weakness. The supreme God is spiritual and pure, but He is aloof. He is the Absolute, but not Father nor Good Shepherd. He can be approached only by the transcendental intelligence, to which He reveals Himself by intuitions or visions not given to dull people. For these

[1] Eus. *Praep. Evang.* iv. 13.

latter polytheism was good enough; they may worship the lower gods, the demons and the heroes, inferior, alloyed, and partly material beings. These will accept bloody sacrifices, and even demand them; these will listen to prayers for earthly goods, for health and wealth and prosperity. As among the Hindoos there are two distinct religions, one for the contemplative, another for the vulgar. The latter, which will be, naturally, far the more common, is neither more nor less than demon-worship, and this will reflect, with very slight efforts to improve, the average sentiments of the time. We shall see later on that this Pythagorean notion of the Absolute Deity was not without influence on the theology of Clement. Further, we shall see how, from the doctrine of the absolute, there follows inevitably the distinction between two lives, indeed two religions, that of free intelligence and that of authority, that of the philosopher and that of the common man, each with a distinct standard of belief and of conduct. Here it is indeed that we trace that influence of paganism upon Christian theology which has been so much spoken about and so little understood.

The birth of Apollonius was miraculous. He was an incarnation of the Egyptian god Proteus.[1] At the age of eighteen he became converted, determined to live henceforth the life of a true Pythagorean, dressed in linen, abstained from flesh and wine, let his hair grow long, took a vow of celibacy and gave away almost all his patrimony. He dwelt in the temple of Aesculapius at Aegae, enjoyed frequent visions of the god, and received from him marvellous powers of healing, and the gift of speaking all the languages in the world.

After some twenty years of this secluded and local ministry he began a series of foreign pilgrimages. Setting out with a little band of seven disciples he went first to Nineveh, where he found Damis, who acknowledged him as a god, followed him, and eventually wrote a rough account of his sayings and doings. From Nineveh he went to Babylon, which he found still existing in all its ancient

[1] *Vita*, i. 4 sqq.

glory; thence across the Caucasus, a truly remarkable feat, to India, where he held much converse with the Brahmins; thence back to Greece, and from Greece to the Gymnosophists of Ethiopia. Thus, by long wanderings among the peoples who were reputed to be most beloved of the gods, he perfected his experience and his supernatural powers. Among these peoples, it will have been noticed, a chief place is assigned to the Brahmins, who were known even to Alexander Polyhistor.[1] Under the Empire commercial intercourse with India had become much more frequent,[2] and there can be little doubt that vague stories of Hindoo philosophy and magic, brought back to the Western world by shipmasters, contributed to the making of Neoplatonism, especially to the occult arts practised by that school.

The miracles wrought by Apollonius, after his discipline was perfected, were innumerable. He healed the sick, cast out devils, raised from death a young girl who was being carried out to burial. But the scene which best deserves our notice is that of his Passion. When Domitian began to persecute the Philosophers Apollonius took ship to Italy to confront the tyrant. He was denounced by Euphrates, the Stoic Pharisee, and charged with having sacrificed a boy, with pretending to be God, and with speaking against Caesar. He was not betrayed by a disciple. Celsus had urged the treason of Judas as a proof of the failure of Jesus, who had not succeeded in persuading even His own adherents. Apollonius appeared of his own accord before the Emperor, was mocked and ill-treated, and scornfully challenged to save himself by a miracle. He accepted the challenge, and vanished from sight. On the afternoon of the same day, he appeared in a grotto at Dicaearchia or Puteoli on the Campanian shore, to two of his disciples, Damis and Demetrius. Demetrius could not believe his eyes till Apollonius stretched out his hand saying, 'Touch me.' It can hardly be doubted what is the real source of all this. Philostratus is offering

[1] See his fragments in Müller, iii, p. 236.
[2] Mommsen, *Provinces*, ii, p. 300.

Julia Domna a new and improved edition of the Passion of our Lord.

Soon after the accession of Nerva, Apollonius ascended into heaven. At what precise date he received divine honours we cannot say; probably not long after the publication of Philostratus's book. Caracalla, the son of Julia, built him a shrine, Alexander Severus placed his bust in the imperial chapel along with those of Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus,[1] and Aurelian was prevented from destroying Tyana by a vision of Apollonius, who came to intercede for his birthplace. The Emperor recognized his divine visitor, because he had seen his statue in so many fanes.[2] Vopiscus, the author of the *Life of Aurelian*, prays for the blessing of the deified philosopher upon his own literary schemes, and vows to write a new biography of Apollonius, in order that his miracles may be proclaimed to all the world in the Latin tongue.

The *Life of Apollonius* is in fact a rival Gospel, stamped with the seal of imperial approval, or perhaps it would be better to say, a kind of concordat between Church and State, suggested to the court by a person of considerable influence, and not unfavourably received. The terms are one supreme ruler on earth, the Emperor; one supreme ruler in heaven, the Highest God; no bloody sacrifices, indeed, if a man so please, no sacrifices at all; worship of the lower gods, demons, and heroes to be tolerated but not enforced; Christ to be accepted as an inspired teacher, on the same footing as Pythagoras or Apollonius. They are much better terms than those proposed by Celsus, who would have made the worship of the demons compulsory on pain of death, and would not recognize Christ at all. Philostratus does not contemplate persecution, and was probably no more hostile to Christians than he was to the Stoic or the ordinary heathen priest; he regarded both of these with great dislike. This was in fact the policy of Severus.

Philostratus does not mention the Christians at all, any more than Herodian or Dion Cassius. All three must have

[1] *Vita Alex. Severi*, 29. [2] *Vita Aureliani*, 23, 24.

had some knowledge of the new religion. Philostratus in particular must have had a tolerably accurate acquaintance with the Gospels, which indeed he has in view throughout. He does not expressly declare the purpose of his romance; it is a flank attack. But the inner meaning is too obvious to be missed, and Hierocles, who in the beginning of the fourth century contrasted Christ with Apollonius, much to the disadvantage of the former, was only saying what everybody thought.[1]

[1] On Hierocles see Duchesne, *De Macario Magnete*, chap. 3.

CHAPTER XXIII

CARACALLA AND THE SYRIAN EMPERORS

Severus bequeathed the throne to his two sons, Caracalla and Geta.[1] His intention was not to divide the Empire but that it should be ruled conjointly by the two. So Marcus Aurelius, whom he greatly admired, and of whom he wished to be regarded as the legitimate heir and successor, had adopted, as his own colleagues, first Verus and afterwards Commodus. But the sons of Severus were both young men of fierce and intractable temper. They had long hated one another, and, shortly after their father's death, Geta, the younger and weaker, was murdered by his brother in the palace, and in the arms of his mother, Julia Domna.

Caracalla was but twenty-three years old at the time of his accession in 211. He began his reign with fratricide, and with the massacre of all his brother's friends and adherents.[2] Among those who perished was the famous lawyer Papinian, who had been highly esteemed by Severus and was regarded as their master by an eminent band of jurists, including Ulpian and Paulus. The Senate hated Caracalla as an enemy of their order, and the aristocratic historians Dion and Herodian describe his cruelty, rapacity, vanity, and profusion in dark colours. As a soldier he appears to have been not wanting in capacity, and he waged war with success in Germany, on the Danube, and in the East. His last campaign was against

[1] Caracallus (Dion Cassius and Spartian) or Caracalla (Aurelius Victor and Eutropius) is a mere nickname derived from a kind of coat which he gave to the people; but it is commonly used by the Latin historians, and is conveniently distinctive. In early life he was known as Bassianus, a name taken from his mother's family. His title is Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and the Greeks generally call him Antoninus. Caracalla received also the sobriquet of Tarantas, from his resemblance to a well-known gladiator of that name, who was short and ugly but remarkable for his ferocious courage. See Dion, lxxviii. 9.

[2] *Vita*, 2–4.

Parthia; while engaged in this he was murdered in the neighbourhood of Carrhae, by his officers headed by M. Opellius Macrinus, in 217.[1]

That he was not wholly without the qualities of a statesman is evident from the most remarkable event in his reign, the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212, by which the Roman franchise was bestowed upon all the free subjects of the Empire, with the possible exception of certain classes which even in the provinces did not enjoy the status of citizens.[2] In this famous edict Caracalla carried to its logical conclusion the policy of his father, who had largely wiped out the distinction between Italy and the provinces. The privileges of the *civis Romanus* had long been felt as a troublesome anomaly, and many considerations, legal, fiscal, and military, called for their abolition. The edict may be regarded as the final act in the unification of the Empire, but, while it bestowed upon the provincials a glorious name, it reduced all men to a common level of political insignificance. Its bearing upon the position of Christians has been sufficiently considered in a previous chapter. The reign of Caracalla appears to have been a time of peace for the Church, though at the beginning of it Scapula persecuted in Africa, and possibly some others of the officers appointed by Severus may have done the same.

Macrinus was a Moor, of base parentage, who had made his way in life by his capacity for business. His ability as an advocate introduced him to Plautianus, who entrusted him with the management of his revenues. Afterwards he had passed into the service of Severus and Caracalla, who had used him in various civil employments of importance. The latter finally made him praetorian prefect, though he seems to have had no military experience at all. Macrinus had calculated, not unjustifiably, that the Senate would take an indulgent view of his crime, but he had quite misjudged the sentiments of the army, who,

[1] *Vita*, 6.

[2] On the obscure and disputed question of the limitations of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* see Schiller, i. 750, and the authorities there referred to.

both for good reasons and for bad, were deeply attached to the house of Severus. Thus he found himself in a most precarious situation, obliged on the one hand to defer to the Senate, who despised him as an obscure and vulgar upstart, and on the other to conciliate, as best he could, the soldiers, his real masters, who scoffed at his military incapacity, and were afraid that he would attempt to reduce their pay and enforce discipline. The troops seized the first opportunity of revolt, and both Macrinus and his son lost their lives.

Macrinus had adopted the name of Severus, and bestowed upon his little son Diadumenianus that of Antoninus, reckoning in vain upon the magic of the appellations. They were indeed charms to conjure with in the East, but not for him. The house of Severus had come to an end with the assassination of Caracalla; his Syrian wife Julia Domna had starved herself to death. But her relatives still held a conspicuous position at Emesa. Her sister Julia Maesa had two daughters, Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea. They had married Syrian husbands; the first was mother of Avitus Bassianus, the second of Alexianus. Both these boys became Emperors. They were both pure Syrians, and not a drop of the blood of Severus ran in their veins. Nevertheless Maesa managed to persuade the troops that her grandson was the natural child of Caracalla. He called himself Marcus Aurelius Antoninus after his reputed father, but is better known as Elagabalus, a name borrowed from the Syrian sun-god, of whom he was hereditary high priest.

Herodian informs us that the god was called Elaeagabalus;[1] hence the form Heliogabalus used by Lampridius; that his worship was widely extended in the region round Emesa and among the satraps and kings of Asia, and that the sign of his presence was not a statue but a conical black stone marked with small bosses. The temple was immensely wealthy, and its treasures were freely used by Maesa in support of her grandson's cause. The cult of the god included circumcision and abstinence from swine's flesh.

[1] v. 5.

Thus the authority of Augustus, after passing through the hands of an African and a Moor, devolved upon a Syrian. It is evident how utterly the old Roman pride had been broken down. The Senate indeed was no longer Roman except in name, but it retained so much of the patrician spirit that it bitterly resented subjection to a woman. Maesa acted as regent for her grandson, and was present at debates in the *curia*, sitting between the consuls in the place reserved for the Emperor. Such a thing had never been seen before, nor was it ever repeated. She was a woman of masculine character and intelligence, and, in spite of this unheard-of presumption, was highly respected to the end of her life. She was unable to guide her wretched grandson, who, though little more than a child, had enough obstinacy to defy restraint. The historians of the time found little to record beyond anecdotes of his bestial debauchery, his prostitution of all public dignities, and his colossal waste of public money. Maesa at last forced him to bestow the title of Caesar, carrying with it the promise of succession, upon his cousin Alexianus. Elagabalus gave way, then changed his mind and tried to murder his cousin. This was more than the soldiers would bear. They killed Elagabalus, and with him his mother Soaemias, dragged their bodies through the streets, and cast them into the sewer. This was in March, 222. Elagabalus was still but eighteen years old.

The one noticeable event in the filthy orgy of his reign was the establishment of the worship of the Syrian sun-god in the city of Rome. The Emperor built for his patron deity a temple on the Palatine[1] and another in the suburbs. Once in every summer the sacred stone was carried in a gorgeous procession from the former to the latter, the Emperor himself running backwards before the chariot of the god[2] along a road powdered with gold-dust. He placed his title of *sacerdos amplissimus dei invicti Solis Elagabali* before that of *Pontifex Maximus*, ordered all officials in all public sacrifices to pronounce the name of

[1] Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, ed. Hülsen, vol. i, pt. iii, p. 106.

[2] Herodian, v. 6.

the Syrian god before those of the other deities invoked, and above the statue of Victory in the Senate-house set up a picture, representing himself in the act of worshipping his national idol.[1] These amazing innovations do not appear to have caused any great scandal. The sun had always been honoured among the subordinate deities of Rome, and Mithraism, which was intimately allied with sun-worship, had attained great popularity, not only among the people but with the Emperors, and especially with the legions.[2] It harmonized very well also with the mode of religious thought represented by Philostratus, and before him by Celsus.

But, further, Elagabalus appears to have formed the plan—so far as such a creature can be credited with any kind of plan—of bringing all religions in the Empire into one, under the same roof with his own favourite cult. Thus he married the Syrian sun-god first to Pallas, and then, when the peaceful deity objected to an enforced union with the warrior maiden, to the heavenly Astarte, or Moon, who was brought from Carthage for the purpose. Into the temple on the Palatine he brought the statue of the Magna Mater, the fire of Vesta, the Palladium, the Ancilia, and all the objects of Roman veneration. He is said to have intended to establish there also the worship of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Christians, in order that, as high-priest of Elagabalus, he might hold in his hand the secrets of all religions.[3]

He regarded religion merely as cult, as the secret routine by which the favour of the deity was purchased. For morality he did not care a straw. But at any rate this profligate little animal was tolerant. It would be a grand mistake to speak of Elagabalus as a monotheist. His idea was that everybody should keep his own god, but should at the same time pay due honour to the god of his neighbour,

[1] Herodian, v. 5; Schiller, i. 763.

[2] On this subject generally and on the influence of Orientalism, notably of Mithraism, upon the titles, authority, and worship of the Caesars, see Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, vol. i, pt. 2, chap. iii.

[3] See his *Life* by Lampridius, 3.

and especially to the god of Caesar. He was not even a syncretist, for he did not identify the gods, holding, as we have seen, that each religion had its own secret. Thus, though the Christian was tolerated, his legal position was not a whit more secure. He might worship Christ, but he might still be called upon to worship the Sun and persecuted for not doing so.

The cousin and successor of Elagabalus, Alexianus, received on his adoption and elevation to the Caesarship the title of Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander; the name of Antoninus was allowed to drop. At the time of his accession he was a mere child, not yet fourteen years old. All the authorities agree in warm praise of his excellent disposition. His intelligence and moral character were admirable, and Lampridius has preserved for us a sketch of his daily life, after he became a man, which might well be a description of that of the first Marcus Aurelius. Unfortunately his resolution was not equal to his mental and moral endowments. A child upon a throne must necessarily be under regents, but all through his life Alexander was governed by his mother Mamaea. She was a capable energetic woman,[1] like others of her family, and had guarded his infancy with devoted care. But she was jealous of her maternal authority. She allowed Alexander to marry Memmia, a Roman lady of high birth, then, fearing the influence of the wife, ordered him to part from her, and he was weak enough to obey. Yet she saw that she could not stand alone in those perilous times, and associated with herself in the regency a committee of the Senate, of whom the most illustrious were the great jurists Paulus and Ulpian. There appears to have been also a second council for military affairs, composed of experienced officers.[2] Guided by these competent hands the administration was excellent. But the civil and military careers

[1] She was charged with avarice by the soldiers who murdered her, and by Lampridius. But the latter says of Alexander 'optimae matris consiliis usus est', *Vita*, 66. What the soldiers called avarice was only reluctance to squander the revenue in exorbitant donations to worthless troops.

[2] Lampridius, *Vita*, 16.

were now definitely separated, the most important offices of the State were in the hands of civilians, and this change still further weakened the already insufficient power of government over the army. There were frequent mutinies, in one of which Ulpian was murdered. At the same time the resurrection of Persia, the overthrow of the Parthian dynasty and the establishment of the Sassanidae in their place under the warlike and ambitious Ardeschir I, added materially to the terrible dangers which threatened the frontiers of the Empire on every side. Alexander escaped without ruin from an unfortunate campaign against Persia, but scarcely had this storm blown over when news reached him that the German tribes were up in arms all along the Rhine and Danube, and that Italy itself was in danger. He hurried into Gaul, and attempted to buy the barbarians off. A mutiny broke out among the troops, headed by Maximinus, and Alexander was murdered with his mother Mamaea, who durst not leave him alone even in the camp, in the spring of 235.

Like all his family Alexander was a devout worshipper of the Sun, but by the advice of his senatorial councillors he abolished the extravagances of his predecessor. He forbade his courtiers to adore him, a servile practice which was as yet repugnant to Roman sentiment, though shortly afterwards it became a regular rule of palace etiquette. He ordered the gods whom Elagabalus had moved into his temple on the Palatine, to be restored to their ancient abodes,[1] and duly observed all the Roman holidays, though he also showed great respect to the Egyptian Isis. He habitually began his day with religious worship, unless he was unclean, or away from Rome. In the palace, for the use of his daily devotions, he had two chapels. In the second there were statues of poets, philosophers, orators, soldiers, of Virgil, Plato, Cicero, and Achilles; the first was reserved for men who had been famous for holiness of life or divine wisdom; amongst these he set up busts of Apollonius, Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus.[2] He was

[1] Herodian, vi. 1.

[2] For this statement Lampridius, *Vita*, 29, refers to the 'scriptor suorum

well-disposed towards the Christians. His mother Mamaea, when at Antioch, during the Persian War, sent for Origen, kept him at court for some time, and held many conversations with him on religious subjects.[1] Hippolytus also addressed to Mamaea a treatise on the Resurrection.[2] When Alexander is said to have worshipped in public every seventh day, we must remember that many pagans did the same, and that Sunday owes its name to the Mithraists who kept it as a holiday. He is said also to have thought of building a temple to Christ.[3] He praised Christians and Jews for the care with which they selected their priests, and regretted that provincial governors were not chosen with the same caution.[4] He caused the Golden Rule, 'Do not to another what thou wouldest not that other should do unto thee,' to be written upon the walls of the palace.[5] Further, Lampridius says of Alexander that 'he suffered Christians to exist',[6] that is to say, that he forbade them to be molested on the ground of their religion. But he went much farther than this. On one occasion, the Christians having occupied a piece of public ground, an action was brought against them by the innkeepers, who asserted that it belonged to their guild. Alexander heard the case and issued a rescript, awarding the land to the Church. 'It was better,' the Emperor added, 'that God should be worshipped on that spot in any way whatever, than that it should be given up to innkeepers.'[7] Thus he formally recognized the Christians of Rome as a corporation capable of holding real property and of building churches upon it. But it would seem that they must have possessed this right for some time previously; otherwise they could hardly have ventured to appear in court and defend an action of this kind. At this very time Ulpian was flourishing, and we have already noticed the broad sense in which this eminent jurist interpreted the law of *fidei commissum*.[8] It may have been to Ulpian that the

temporum'. This was probably Gargilius, *Vita*, 37, but Lampridius quotes several other Latin authorities for the biography of Alexander, see *Vita*, 48.

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 21, 3. 4. [2] Hippolytus, part ii, p. 251, Berlin ed.
[3] *Vita*, 43. [4] *Vita*, 45. [5] *Vita*, 51. [6] *Vita*, 22.
[7] *Vita*, 49. [8] See above, p. 262.

Church owed the right of holding property,[1] or Ulpian may be putting on record a change in the law of trusteeship which had been adopted by the courts some years before. Anyhow this rescript of Alexander must be regarded as the first authoritative recognition of the Christian Church. We may observe also that this was the act of an Emperor who guided himself habitually by the opinions of the Senate. The Senate cannot at this time have been inclined to deal hardly with Christians.

[1] Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* V. xi. 19, states that Domitius (Ulpian) in the seventh book of his *De Officio Proconsulis* collected all the imperial rescripts against Christianity. It was part of his task to do so, but it does not follow that he approved of them. Indeed, as he was not murdered till 228, and had been largely responsible for Alexander's policy for nearly seven years, it may be presumed that he did not.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE APOLOGISTS

A STRONG proof of the vigorous advance of the Church during this period is to be found in the number, ability, and courage of the writers whom she produced. Of the controversialists called forth by the three great debates, the Gnostic, Quartodeciman, and Montanist, perhaps enough has been said. There remain the apologists, a remarkable band who in literary skill compare not unfavourably with heathen writers of that decadent age, while in elevation of sentiment and moral earnestness they are much superior to them.

Quadratus probably delivered his Apology, of which all but a single fragment has perished, to Hadrian at Athens. Aristides (whose Greek text the Dean of Westminster discovered in 1891 almost entire, embedded in the mediaeval romance of *Barlaam and Joasaph*) addressed himself to Pius. Both writers were inspired by the hope of immediate toleration which in the time of these Emperors might well seem to be not unreasonable.

Others, Justin and his pupil Tatian, Athenagoras, Melito,[1] were pleading for their lives in the bitter times of Marcus Aurelius.

To the reign of Commodus belongs Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch. Early in the third century we have Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. The dates of Minucius Felix and of the *Epistle to Diognetus* are much disputed; some would place them in the second century, some a little before the middle of the third. But they have the same family

[1] The Syrian Apology which bears his name is by a later hand and not authentic.

marks as their predecessors and it will be well to treat of them with the others.[1]

After Justin all the apologists seem to have the attack of Fronto more or less in view. Celsus also may have provided them with topics, though we do not hear of the *True Word* until it was pressed upon the attention of Origen by his friend Ambrosius.

It will be advisable to deal with all these writers one by one. The preferable course will be to give a sketch of their arguments under four headings: (1) their defence of Christianity from the moral and social point of view; (2) their treatment of paganism; (3) their attitude towards philosophy; (4) their account of the Christian faith and worship.

Under the first fall three kinds of accusation which the Christian advocate was specially concerned to rebut; they were, in fact, the three pillars upon which the persecutions rested. They were (i) Immorality, (ii) Irreligion, (iii) Incivism.

The charge of immorality was the oldest, most inveterate, and most damaging of all. It was especially operative in the West. We have seen how peculiarly exasperating it was to the Romans in the cases of the Bacchanalia and of the cults of Druidism, Isis, and Moloch. In the East charges of this nature do not appear to have been seriously entertained. In the Roman half of the Empire the *flagitia* were a cause, probably the main cause, of the Neronian persecution. Tacitus believed in them. Pliny inquired and found no reason for accepting them. But Fronto gave them unqualified credence, and they occasioned the cruel persecution of Lyons. Possibly these infamous accusations

[1] As to the date of Minucius Felix see Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 324. Harnack would place him in the first half of the third century, following Massobieau and Monceaux. The *Epistle to Diognetus* (the author is quite unknown) Harnack, *Chron.* i. 513, considers to belong to the end of the second or beginning of the third century. Lightfoot (*Ign.* i. 517) thought that it probably belonged to 150 or thereabouts, and that the Diognetus addressed may have been the tutor of Marcus Aurelius. The work of Hermias, the *Derision of the Heathen Philosophers*, has been ascribed to the third and to the sixth century, and is probably later than the time of Constantine; see Harnack, *Chron.* ii, p. 196. Bardenhewer (*Altkirchl. Litt.* vol. ii, pp. 290–314) would place Minucius Felix about 250, the *Epistle to Diognetus* in the second century, Hermias in the third.

had ceased for a time and became menacing again in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Aristides does not notice them, nor does Justin. The charges resolve themselves into two; cannibalism at the Eucharist, and promiscuous lewdness at services after dark. But for details we have to turn to the later apologists, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Tertullian, and Minucius Felix, who were all posterior to Fronto.[1]

The Christians were accused of imitating Thyestes and Oedipus. Such falsehoods could only be met with a blank denial. But all the apologists from first to last insist upon the purity of Christian morals, which both in theory and in practice were greatly superior to those of the heathen world.[2] On this point they confidently appeal to the witness of facts. 'We did evil things,' they say, 'and now we do them no more, not one or two of us, but the whole body.' The respectable heathen for the most part admit this plea as valid.

The charge of irreligion was more difficult to meet. The Christians were commonly called atheists,[3] and the two heads of the indictment under which they suffered were sacrilege and treason. Sacrilege meant that they did not worship the gods of the State. Treason meant that in particular they would not worship the genius of Caesar. And these charges could not be refuted. From the time of Marcus Aurelius the apologists complain bitterly that they were put to death for 'the mere name', that they were not allowed to plead in defence, or even in mitigation of punishment, their innocence of life, their loyalty or the reasonableness of their faith. But the complaint was quite unheeded. Rome claimed the right to decide what a man should worship. She was tolerant to this extent, that she would allow a man to worship what he pleased provided

[1] But these charges are alluded to many times by Justin; see the references in Otto's note on *Ap.* i. 10. See also Athenag. *Leg.* 3. 31; Eus. *H. E.* v. 1. 14; Tert. *Apol.* 7. They are alluded to also in *Ep. to Diogn.* 5, 'We have our meals in common but not our wives.' The artistic details, the dog that pulled over the lights, and so on, were certainly supplied by Fronto; see Min. Felix, *Oct.* 9.

[2] The best passage on Christian morality is perhaps that in Aristides, 15.

[3] Aristides, 15; Justin, *Ap.* i. 13; Athenag. 4; Theoph. *Ad Aut.* i. 2; Tert. *Apol.* 10.

that he would also worship her recognized deities. This the Church could not do. It was vain for Tertullian to urge that all Christians prayed for the Emperor and for all that were set in authority under him, as ministers of God, or that though they could not swear by the genius of Caesar they were willing to swear by his health.[1] The one thing that was required of them they found impossible, and the law would have no compromise.

Nor was the accusation of incivism much easier to repel. Partly the apologists were embarrassed by the fact that Christians were not agreed among themselves as to the degree in which they might accommodate themselves to the social and political arrangements of the Empire.

Undoubtedly Christianity shook the framework of the Roman civilization at every point. This was in fact the great service which it came to bestow upon the world. It was to make all things new. Let us see how it affected the three great social institutions of the household, the municipality, and the state.

It touched very closely the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave.

At what date a rite of Christian marriage was introduced is not clearly known, but Ignatius at the beginning of the second century insists that men ought not to marry without the cognizance of the bishop.[2] In the time of Tertullian Christians were expected to notify their intention of marrying to the Church,[3] but some did not observe this rule. The parties were married 'in church';[4] their matrimony was brought about by the Church, confirmed by an oblation, sealed by a benediction, announced by angels, ratified by the Father.[5] But this describes the ideal or custom of the stricter professors. Many preferred the ordinary civil

[1] *Apol.* 32 foll. [2] *Poly.* 5. [3] *De Pud.* 4; *De Monog.* 11.

[4] *De Monog.* 11.

[5] *Ad Ux.* ii. 8. See on this passage Gothofredus on *Cod. Theod.* iii. 7. 3; Bingham, xxii. 4. 1. The Church played the part of the customary *conciliator* or *conciliatrix*, the agent by whom the parties were introduced and commended to one another. Apparently the Eucharist formed part of the rite. The giving of a ring, an old heathen custom, belonged originally to espousals, not to marriage proper; see Bingham.

marriage, and this was allowed, though disliked, by the Church.

In the time of Tertullian there were many mixed marriages. Often it happened that wife or husband was converted, and this was naturally the cause of much domestic unhappiness. Not all Gentile husbands of Christian wives behaved so magnanimously as Aulus Plautius. Justin[1] gives an instance of a blackguard husband who denounced his wife. About the end of the second century Herminianus, governor of Cappadocia, persecuted the Christians because they had won over his wife,[2] and Tertullian affirms that many heathen husbands would extort sums of money from their Christian wives by way of blackmail.[3] St. Perpetua was probably denounced by her husband.

The ordinary civil marriage allowed unlimited freedom of divorce. Even mutual consent was not necessary. The husband could turn the wife out of doors at any time and for any reason, and the wife could give her husband his discharge with the same irresponsibility. Some Christians from the first[4] preached the indissolubility of marriage, but the law of the Empire was strong upon the other side, and the ecclesiastical view could not always be enforced. Thus the Christian wife mentioned by Justin divorced her pagan husband, and is not blamed by the Father for so doing.

When we consider how profoundly Christianity affected every department of life, especially its pleasures, it is obvious there must have been endless occasions for the severest disagreement between married couples. The same thing is true of the relation of parent and child. Roman sentiment and Roman law insisted with extraordinary vigour upon the authority of the father over his offspring. It was absolute, extending even to the power of life and death. On the other hand no virtue was more prized than that of filial obedience. Again, the son was the inheritor of the family *sacra*. It was his duty to say the prayers and offer the sacrifices upon which the repose of all the dead members of his house depended. If the son became

[1] *Ap.* ii. 2. [2] Tert. *Ad Scap.* 3. [3] *Ad Ux.* ii. 5.
[4] See Hermas, *Mand.* iv.

a Christian the customary rites were no longer performed, and all his ancestors in a body, according to ancient belief, were condemned to perpetual misery in the unseen world. Further he became by his conversion a criminal, liable to the most degrading punishments, and his execution was felt by all his relatives as an ineffaceable disgrace.[1] There must have been much unhappiness on this account also.[2]

The Church was arraigned as the fomentor of family discord by Aristides the Rhetor and by Celsus. Obviously she could not satisfy her enemies on this point. The apologists maintained that nowhere was obedience to husband and father so well taught as in the New Testament. What they said was true, but with the necessary salvo that God must always come before man, and neither an evil pagan nor a religious pagan would admit this reservation.

Slavery gave rise to still more dangerous questions. If the fiery Tertullian could have had his will, no Christian slave could have handed the wine to his heathen master for a libation without incurring the guilt and the penalty of idolatry.[3] But the Church was more humane. There can be no doubt that the slave was permitted to bow his head in the house of Rimmon, possibly on condition that he made the sign of the cross on each act of compliance. The Christian authority carried their respect for law to the extreme limit of what was possible. Ignatius[4] warns the slave that he is not to expect the Church to buy his freedom, and that he is bound to show his Christianity by respect and obedience. The slave could be neither baptized nor ordained without his master's consent.[5] The Church trod warily on this most dangerous ground, and could always point to the New Testament as a proof that she was far from any desire to provoke a servile war. Nor was she

[1] *Passion of St. Perpetua*, 5.

[2] Among the Fayûm papyri is one containing a curse pronounced by a pagan mother upon her son who had become a Christian, solemnly cutting him off from kith and kin. See *Trans. of Society of Biblical Archaeol.*, 1884, part 1.

[3] *De Idol.* 17.

[4] *Poly.* 4.

[5] *Can. Hipp.* ed. Achelis, p. 76; *Can. Ap.* 82 (81).

ever seriously attacked on this ground. Even Celsus goes no further than to complain that ignorant menials attempted in secret to proselytize the women and children of the family. On the other hand the Church recognized the equality of all men in the eyes of God, and gave practical expression to this great truth so far as she could. Christian masters were exhorted to instruct their slaves in the Gospel.[1] De Rossi notices that the term slave is never found in epitaphs.[2] Callistus, who began life as a slave, rose to be Bishop of Rome. We have seen how this humane Pope opposed the strongest social prejudices, and perhaps even the Roman law, in favour of slave marriages. Lastly, the slave could and often did attain to what was regarded as the highest of all earthly, and even of all created heavenly, glories, the crown of martyrdom. Blandina of Lyons and Felicitas of Carthage stood far above any Empress in the estimation of the Church.

As to the municipality, the chief charge was that Christians would not serve upon the town council or accept a magistracy. Some Christians undoubtedly took this course, alleging the danger of idolatry and the unlawfulness of providing heathen spectacles or of sitting in a heathen court of law, especially in a criminal court,[3] or affirming that they stood aside out of modesty or contempt of earthly ambition. The cynic incurred the same reproach[4] and on similar grounds. He professed to be content with the kingdom of his own soul. Many, however, took their turn of office, defending themselves by the examples of Joseph and of Daniel.[5]

In the second century the stricter Christians were not alone in shirking their municipal duties. These local dignities were ruinously expensive. Under the Empire all, and more than all, that is provided in modern England by the rates for the beautification, the health, the amenities

[1] Aristides, *Ap.* 15 (Syriac Version).

[2] *Bullett.* 1866, p. 24, in Harnack, *Mission*, p. 122 *n.*

[3] Tert. *De Idol.* 17; Tatian, *Or.* 11; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 8; *Canons of Hipp.* ed. Achelis, p. 82.

[4] See above, p. 243; Epict. Diat. iii. 22. 83.

[5] *De Idol.* 18.

of the town, for the amusement of the people, for the relief of the poor, was expected from the personal liberality of the decurions and magistrates. During the first century public spirit was high, places in the curia or town council were eagerly sought, and many men spent their fortunes in the hope of a statue in the forum or a eulogistic inscription on the walls of a basilica. But for a variety of reasons, of which the chief was this ruinous expense, the well-to-do heathen began to shirk the honours of public life. By the end of the second century we find extremely sharp laws enacted against all who declined to accept their turn of office.[1] About the same time wealthy Church-people were becoming much more numerous. From this time forth it was impossible for a Christian of the requisite standing to avoid his fair share of the civic burdens, and Christian magistrates and decurions were common in the time of Decius and Diocletian. Even before this date, probably about the middle of the second century, the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* asserts that 'we bear our share in all things as citizens'.[2]

As regards the township, then, it is evident that a strict Christian would be charged with casting his burdens upon the shoulders of others, with want of public spirit, and meanness. Further he would lay himself open to the accusation of misanthropic gloom.[3] The town looked to him, if he was wealthy, for feasts, processions, shows of all kinds, which he could not provide. In other ways also he incurred the same reproach. If in honour of some victory every window was lighted up with lamps, every door decked with green branches, the Christian's house was dark and unadorned.[4] Yet many conformed in this as in other things to public sentiment. Some even allowed themselves to taste the forbidden delights of the theatre, the circus, and the arena, alleging that they were not prohibited in Scripture.[5] Others maintained that pleasure

[1] See Ulpian in *Digest*, l. 5. 1. 2.

[2] Chap. 5; see also *Canons of Hippolytus*, ed. Achelis, p. 82.

[3] For an answer to this charge of gloominess see *Ep. to Diog.* 6 and Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 38. [4] *De Idol.* 15. [5] *De Spect.* 3.

in itself and of whatever kind was illicit. Between these extremes it was not easy to strike upon a satisfactory line of argument.

As to the State the chief and most fatal complaint against the Christian was that arising out of Caesar-worship. If he refused to pay the customary adoration to the genius of the Emperor he became at once guilty of high treason or *maiestas*[1] and appeared to be ungrateful for all the benefits which he owed to the *pax Romana*. Tertullian, who was proud of the Roman name, insists upon the peacefulness, loyalty, and innocence of his brethren, but greatly weakens his impressive defence by the unfortunate admission that there was nothing for which the Christian cared so little as the Republic.[2] Here was a frank admission of what in the eyes of a Roman was a degrading and most pernicious crime. Not to love Rome—what was this but hatred of the human race? Celsus in the time of Marcus Aurelius charged the Christians with indifference to the disasters of the Marcomannian War. In the time of Decius the Christian poet Commodian looks to the king of the Goths for deliverance. Some of the believers were no doubt embittered by oppression. Many looked upon wars and persecutions as signs of the immediate appearance of Antichrist and regarded all mundane affairs as insignificant when the Day of Judgement was already dawning. Certainly the Christians were no traitors. They prayed for the Emperor and took no part in plots or rebellions. Passive obedience they rendered to the full, but it could hardly be expected that they would cheerfully make sacrifices on behalf of a State which denied their right to exist.

The charge of disloyalty was aggravated by the opposition of many Christians to military service at a time when the Empire was beginning to feel that its very existence was at stake. We have seen what genuine alarm existed in the

[1] Tert. *Apol.* 28 sqq.

[2] 'Nec ulla magis res aliena quam publica,' *Apol.* 38. But Tertullian was not quite consistent. In another passage of the same treatise, *Apol.* 31, he says 'when the Empire is shaken all its members are shaken with it, and we also have some share in the disaster'.

mind of Celsus on this account. It was not a very serious matter. Conscription was universal after the time of Pius, and in Tertullian's time Christian soldiers were very numerous.[1] They were not unwilling to serve. Not to speak of other motives which appeal to young men of spirit, the army was the main avenue to advancement in life. Some means must have been found to make service tolerable for them. This we may gather from Tertullian. On one occasion when a donation was given to the army by Severus, the troops were paraded with garlands on their heads. A Christian soldier refused to wear the garland in the usual way, but carried it dangling from his arm. He was put under arrest for this breach of discipline; whether he was further punished we do not know. Tertullian wrote a treatise on the incident. He insists that it is not lawful for a Christian to take the military oath or to bear arms, but his main contention is the wickedness of wearing a garland of flowers upon the head. The soldier in question agreed with him upon the second point, but not upon the first. It seems probable that the affair arose out of the indiscreet zeal of the commander, for Tertullian ends by saying that a Mithraist would have acted in precisely the same way. Mithraists were numerous in the army, and some allowance must have been made by sensible officers for this well-known peculiarity of their creed.[2]

The apologists were not content to maintain a purely defensive attitude. They carried the war into the enemy's country and insisted upon the immorality and absurdity of the pagan beliefs. The first charge was easy to establish. For the second they employed two arguments borrowed from their antagonists. One was derived from Euemerus of Messene, who had asserted that the gods were deified

[1] *Apol.* 37. They were, however, defying the opinion of the ecclesiastical authorities. See the *Canons of Hipp.* ed. Achelis, p. 81 sq. The Canons speak here apparently with two voices. At first they say that a soldier is not to be admitted at all: then that a Christian may not volunteer to serve, but, if impressed, he may. In that case he may not shed blood, and, if proved to have done so, must be excommunicated until he has purged his offence by sincere repentance. They especially forbid the soldier to wear a crown upon his head.

[2] *De Corona Militis.*

men.[1] The other was taken from the religious enlightened paganism which was strongly represented in the second century. All the best men of this period were striving after a kind of monotheism. They retained all the old deities, but distinguished between one Supreme God who was pure beneficence, and therefore could not punish, and a multitude of inferior gods, whom they preferred to call the demons, beings of mixed nature, some almost wholly divine, some wholly, or almost wholly, evil.[2] Unfortunately the demons, who were alone to be feared, were the sole objects of popular adoration. Here the apologists found two battering rams capable of shaking to the foundations the castle walls of paganism. And these formidable engines had been manufactured for them by the philosophers. Yet Justin and Clement alone recognized the debt which they owed to cultivated reason. All the other apologists inveighed in the severest terms against philosophy. They had been so alarmed by the very imperfect use made by the Gnostics of pagan thought that they could see only the evil of the tree of knowledge.

It was part of the apologists' task also to defend Christianity. They insisted with force upon the excellence of its morality, but they endeavoured also to show the reasonableness of its theology. They were hampered, of course, by the necessity of the case. Writing for a heathen audience they could present only a popular sketch, making very little use of Scripture, and giving few details of their mode of worship. Justin is the boldest of them all; he names and explains the sacraments, and gives a tolerably full description of the Liturgy.

In their desire to show that Christianity is the religion of nature and of common sense the apologists made great use of the Logos doctrine. It is important to observe that no ecclesiastical writer before Clement of Alexandria shows

[1] Tatian, *Or.* 27. The tomb of Jupiter was shown in Crete. Athenagoras, *Supp.* 29; Theophilus, *Ad Aut.* ii. 34; Tert. *Apol.* 10; Min. Felix, *Oct.* 20, 21; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* ii. 37, 38.

[2] On the demons see Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Minucius Felix.

any acquaintance with Philo.[1] Further, that at no time was any religious significance attached to the Logos by the heathen Platonists. The apologists, therefore, before Clement were obliged to explain this title, which they derived from St. John, by the help of Stoicism.

In the system of the Porch Logos plays a very important part.

It means in the first place Reason or Intelligence and is the highest attribute of God.

In the second place it means Power and in this sense is the active cause of creation.[2] For this purpose the Universal Reason emitted a vast number of individual forces, Spermatic Words, or Seedlike Forces, which as soon as they were shot into matter, began to germinate and assume shapes.

It should be added that the Stoics were materialists, and held that all things, even God Himself, had bodies. Thus an Incarnation, a notion to which the pagan idealists were vehemently hostile, was from the Stoical point of view not wholly inconceivable.

To these ideas Justin fitted on his Christian theology as well as he could, much as people in these days try to adapt the Creed to the forms of Hegel or of Kant. Christ is *the* Spermatic Word, the sum of all the Words. To this point Justin approaches his hearers under the hood of a popular doctrine, but speedily drops the disguise and shows the face of the Christian theologian. Christ is the Reason of God, at first immanent in the Father's bosom, then sent forth as the Spoken Word for Creation and for Revelation. He is the Son of God, first born Son, of the essence of the Father, and therefore in no sense inferior to the Father, yet as Son also numerically distinct from the Father. One thing he could not learn from Stoicism, the difference between time and eternity. Thus when he says that the Word was begotten before the world he is using what might be taken as a time-phrase, and this was one of the errors upon

[1] Philo is referred to three times in the dubious *Cohortatio* of Justin for the antiquity of the Jewish religion and the origin of the LXX ; chs. 9, 10, 13.

[2] Diog. L. vii. 134.

which Arianism was built. But this begins with the world, and all that was before is eternal. Justin has no doubt that Christ was fully God though derived from and in that sense subordinate to the Father.[1]

In one remarkable passage[2] Justin says that 'formerly' our Lord was revealed from time to time as the Logos, but is now known by a higher and better title as 'the Son and Apostle of God, Jesus the Christ'. He feels that after all Logos is too metaphysical an idea and appeals too much to the head and too little to the heart. What he wants to display to the heathen is their divinely appointed Redeemer.

According to the Stoics the body of man was made by the Spermatic Words. But the Reason or Logos of man was a particle of God Himself. Hence the Stoics called Conscience 'the god within'. Conscience, Reason, is man's proper lord; it always possesses light, though the light may be dimmed by false opinions. The right life for man is that according 'to Reason' or 'according to Nature', for Reason, when it bears sway, is Nature.

Here Justin found the common ground he needed. All men have Reason because all men are made in the image of the Logos. Reason is 'the congenital seed of the Logos which is in us'.[3] All men have that light, even heathen and Jews, Christians alone possess it in perfection.[4] Yet all men, if they will follow where that light leads, may find God and His Life. Among the heathen Socrates and Heraclitus were Christians before Christ. The Stoics were excellent moralists because they learnt from the Word.[5] Nay, Justin is willing to admit that, even after the Incarnation, Jews who deny the divinity of Jesus yet accept Him as Messiah and do not persecute the Gentile Christians, may yet be saved.[6] These are large admissions, and will show what value Justin set upon Reason, or Conscience, or Common Sense, upon the 'testimony of the soul which is naturally Christian', as Tertullian says.

[1] Cp. the doctrine of Tertullian. [2] *Ap.* i. 63. [3] *Ap.* ii. 13.
[4] *Ap.* ii. 8. [5] *Ap.* ii. 7. [6] *Trypho*, 47.

With the exception of a few Stoical flourishes and embellishments, themselves suggested by the preface to St. John's Gospel, Justin's theology is entirely Biblical. Everything that he says is based upon some passage of Scripture; if there are inferences and interpretations, they are based upon Christian documents and drawn by Christian logic. The only novelty, if it be a novelty, is the assertion that the Logos appeared to the Patriarchs; this rests upon Jewish speculation.[1]

Complaint has been made that the apologists turned Christianity into a philosophy. A philosophy is a more or less systematic account of God, the world, and man, and so far every intelligent religion is one. But a philosophy is also the product of free human reason, and in this sense Christianity is not one, for all the apologists insisted with perfect justice that its maxims are given by Revelation. The Gentiles maintained that their philosophy taught the same things as Christianity, and taught them better. Justin and his fellows inverted this statement.[2]

Philosophy always aims at unity, coherence, and system, and every intelligent religion must make the same endeavour, being impelled partly by what we called heresies from within, and partly by keen criticism from without. In the second century Christianity was beginning to respond to this inevitable call. Its efforts in this direction were praiseworthy, unless it should appear that pagan logic not only pointed out the gaps in her system, but actually supplied the material for filling them up, and this does not appear to have been the case.

[1] See *Trypho*, 128, where Justin appeals to certain Jews who held that the Logos appeared to Moses, Abraham, and Jacob. They called this power Logos 'because He bears the words of God to man'. This can hardly refer directly to Philo. The same belief is found in Irenaeus, who may have borrowed the idea from Justin.

[2] *Trypho*, 8.

CHAPTER XXV

MAXIMIN

We have seen Africans, Syrians, and even a Moor invested with the title of Augustus, yet all these had received a civilized education and were used to the ways of civilized life. Maximin was a pure barbarian. He is called a Thracian, but was really a Goth, whose parents lived in Thrace. As a youth he had been a shepherd in the mountains. Severus, struck by his huge frame and stag-like agility, made him a soldier and promoted him. Under Caracalla he became centurion. In the reign of Macrinus he appears to have been dismissed the service, probably as a declared adherent of the Severian dynasty, retired to his native village, bought land, and lived in close intimacy with his Gothic countrymen. Elagabalus made him tribune, but he kept aloof from the dissolute court. Alexander gave him the command of the fourth legion. Finally he murdered his master in Gaul and became Emperor himself.

He was the first Emperor who was not merely elected by the army but was not even confirmed by the Senate—a camp Emperor pure and simple. Naturally the aristocracy painted him in the darkest colours. Yet he was not devoid of praiseworthy qualities. He could hardly understand Latin,[1] but he caused his son, whom he greatly loved and made partner in the imperial dignity, to be educated by the best masters of the day. Like all Goths he was chaste, at any rate chaste enough to abominate the obscenities of Elagabalus, and he was just. Even Capitolinus goes so far as to admit that he was 'often just'.[2] He was an excellent soldier. To a fellow officer who bantered him for taking needless pains about the details of his duty when his pro-

[1] *Vita*, 2. 9. [2] *Vita*, 2.

motion was already assured, he replied, 'The greater I become the harder I shall work.' He looked after his men 'like a father'; even their boots were cared for, and they were ready to follow him anywhere. But he had all the cruelty of a savage. He was almost openly at war with the Senate, and he was hard pressed for money to supply the needs of the army, who wanted not only food, clothing, and regular payment, but donations as well. The ordinary taxes were not nearly sufficient to supply his budget. He plundered the temples, melting down and turning into coin the most sacred and revered statues of gods and heroes,[1] and he let loose the ever ready horde of informers; plundering, banishing, and even putting to death great numbers of wealthy people in every part of the Empire. There were also constant plots, real or imaginary, and they led to numerous executions.

The whole world of civilians groaned helplessly under this ruthless military government; at last in the spring of 238 the exactions of the procurator of Africa caused a peasant revolt. The procurator was murdered and Gordianus the proconsul, a man of high lineage, good character, and great experience of official life, but in his eightieth year, was compelled by the insurgents to assume the purple. The Senate received the news with shouts of jubilation, put to death Vitalianus the praetorian prefect and Sabinus the city prefect, who governed Rome in the Emperor's absence, and acclaimed Gordian and his son as Augusti. Their joy was premature: the younger Gordian was slain in Africa by the legate of Numidia and the elder committed suicide when he heard of the disaster. But the Senate was too deeply engaged to draw back. They chose Pupienus, a capable soldier, and Balbinus, one of their own number, as Augusti, added to them a grandson of the first-named Gordian, as Caesar, and prepared strenuously for war. In the end Maximin and his son were murdered by their own troops, late in the year 238.

Maximin is traditionally regarded as one of the great

[1] Herodian, vii. 3.

persecutors of the Church. Eusebius[1] says that Maximin set on foot a persecution, because he was enraged against the household of Alexander, which was composed for the most part of Christians, and that he ordered the rulers of the churches, and them alone, to be put to death. Herodian[2] says that Maximin treated the household of Alexander with great severity, put a large number of them to death, killing many and dismissing all the rest because he suspected them of plots against his life. They were deeply attached to their former master, and the new Emperor doubted their fidelity. Christians were always numerous in the palace, and under Alexander it is highly probable that they were more numerous than ever. Herodian's account is probably true. Maximin was beset with conspiracies; one, that of Magnus, a consular, was so widespread and formidable that 4,000 men are said to have been put to death without any form of trial,[3] and if the dependants of Alexander excited the least suspicion they would have short shrift from this fierce soldier, who never troubled his head with the niceties and delays of legal procedure. But there is little evidence to show that he was a deliberate persecutor of the Church. In Palestine Ambrosius and Protoctetus were imprisoned but not executed. Pontianus, Bishop of Rome, died in the mines of Sardinia on September 28, 235,[4] and Hippolytus perished there also about the same time. At the same date happened a sharp persecution in Cappadocia and Pontus, mentioned by Firmilian in his letter to Cyprian.[5] It was occasioned by a series of terrible earthquakes, which utterly destroyed several towns in those regions, and was conducted by Serenianus, governor of Cappadocia. It caused great horror, because it came suddenly after a long period of security. How far the governor may have been driven to these harsh measures of repression by the conduct of the brethren themselves we do not know. But they seem to have looked upon the earthquakes as a sign of the approaching end of the world. A prophetess appeared

[1] *H. E.* vi. 28. [2] vii. 1. [3] *Vita*, 10.
[4] Harnack, *Chron.* i. 727. [5] Cyp. *Ep.* 75. 10.

among them, who seduced many of the Christian community. In her ecstasies she pretended that she could cause earthquakes—a boast which would certainly arouse the greatest horror and wrath amongst the pagans of the countryside. Finally she set out barefoot, in the depth of winter, proclaiming that she was bound for Jerusalem, whence she had come, and was followed by a band of devotees. Firmilian adds that she preached, baptized, and administered the Eucharist, and that she was finally exorcised by a deacon. Aelius Serenianus was one of those eminent men who formed the council of Alexander Severus, and his moral and religious character stood very high[1]; but such fanaticism as this could not be tolerated by any Roman official, any more than the Doukhobors could be suffered by the Canadian authorities to leave their homes and property and wander forth on their blind and aimless pilgrimage. But the persecution, if such it must be called, was strictly local. Firmilian himself was not molested, and in the province generally there was so little ill feeling towards Christians, that when Origen was thought to be unsafe in Caesarea of Palestine, his friends sent him away to Caesarea of Cappadocia, where he found shelter in the house of Juliana, and went on peaceably there with his studies. There he wrote his treatise on martyrdom for the consolation of Ambrosius, Protoctetus, and their fellow confessors. Other similar outbreaks of fanaticism appear to have happened in Asia shortly before, caused perhaps by the near approach of the thousandth year of Rome or by calculations based upon the visions of Daniel. Hippolytus tells us of two.[2] Not long before he wrote his Commentary on Daniel a Syrian bishop persuaded a number of the brethren to follow him into the mountains with their women and children, there to meet Christ. The governor was on the point of sending troops after them, but his wife, who was a Christian, dissuaded him from doing so, lest he should give occasion to a general persecution. Another bishop in Pontus prophesied that the Day of Judgement would come

[1] *Vita Alex. Severi*, 68.

[2] *On Daniel*, iv. 18, 19, Berlin ed., p. 230 sqq.

in a year's time. Here also the brethren abandoned their homes and wandered forth. But the year ran out and nothing happened: the men resumed the cultivation of their land, the young women were given in marriage, but those who had sold their fields were reduced to beggary.

There was no trouble in Africa; Cyprian tells us that thirty years of peace preceded the outbreak of the Decian persecution; nor is Maximin mentioned in the twelfth book of the *Oracula Sibyllina*. Nor do we read that he ever promulgated any rescript or edict against the Christians. Nor does it seem probable that a man who cared so little about the susceptibilities of pagan devotees that he carried off by force the gold and silver statues of every god or hero and sent them to the mint, would want to shed the blood of those who did not believe in their divinity. He has been credited with the astute plan of starving out Christianity by striking down its teachers. But Maximin was not astute. He knew nothing but his own business as a soldier, and never looked beyond the passion of the moment.

No doubt some Christians suffered for the faith in Rome and in Palestine, perhaps in a sense in Cappadocia. But in the first two places, possibly also in the third, no one appears to have been actually sentenced to death. What persecution there was sprang in all probability from the indiscretion of the Christians themselves, or from the ill will of some of the magistrates and many of the populace against the Church. Alexander had not struck the old rescripts out of the standing directions to proconsuls. They were a rusty weapon, but could still be used.

We may here recall to mind the sober words of Origen: 'Those who have died for the Christian faith at different times are few, and may be easily counted.'[1] It is true that we do not know all; that under each and all of the Emperors the life of a Christian was precarious; and that many perished in the mines or in prison with little or no notice. But the Empire was a vast place. When we speak of it we are speaking of the whole world, from Britain to Mesopotamia, yet the martyrs of the early Church, which

[1] *Contra Celsum*, iii. 8.

was as broad as the Empire, even if we include those who perished under Decius and Diocletian, were vastly outnumbered by the heretics who died for their faith in the sixteenth century in almost every one of the realms which have sprung out of the Empire. It was not the actual tale of the martyrs that excited such horror and indignation; it was the wickedness of religious persecution, a crime as yet almost unknown. The victims who died in the reign of Maximin can hardly have exceeded a dozen at most, and their death was probably not due to any deliberate purpose of the Emperor. But their fate was wholly unexpected, the Church was strong enough to make a vehement protest, and even the pagans felt small interest to defend so barbarous a ruler. Finally Christian teachers from the time of Decius began to find in Scripture a prophecy of the actual number of persecutions to be endured by the Church, and, to make up the mystical figure of seven or ten, found it convenient to place the name of Maximin upon the roll of infamy.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GORDIANS TO DECIUS

Before the close of the year 238 the two senatorial Emperors, Pupienus and Balbinus, were killed by the praetorian guard, and the youngest Gordian, son or nephew of the second, was set upon the throne by the soldiers.[1] Gordian counted in his pedigree the names of Pompey, the Scipios, and the Antonii, but he was a mere child at the time of his accession, and a child in character he remained during his reign of six years. Fortunately he allowed himself to be guided by his father-in-law Timesitheus, an excellent and capable man. Timesitheus died shortly after the outbreak of a new Persian war, and Gordian was murdered by Philip, his praetorian prefect, in 244. The only incident in his reign that calls for our notice is that Plotinus, the most famous of the Neoplatonists, joined the army assembled for the invasion of Persia in order to profit by this opportunity of studying at first hand the philosophy of the Magi and the Hindoos. After the death of the Emperor, Plotinus settled in Rome, where he spent the rest of his life. Philip was an Arabian, and owed his elevation solely to his military ability, which, though he gave small proof of it, was thought in the Eastern army to be considerable. His reign and character are almost wholly unknown. But Eusebius informs us that he and his Empress Severa received letters from Origen,[2] and states also that 'it is generally said that Philip was a Christian, that he desired to worship in the church on Easter Eve, and was admitted on condition

[1] It is characteristic of the darkness, which at this point falls upon Roman history, that Capitolinus cannot decide whether he was son or nephew. Capitolinus could not even feel quite sure whether the Pupienus of the Latin writers was or was not identical with the Maximus of Herodian and Dexippus. The full name of this Emperor was M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus. See Schiller, i, p. 790 foll.

[2] *H. E.* vi. 36. 3.

of first making confession and doing penance.'[1] According to Leontius of Antioch,[2] the bishop by whom Philip was thus received was Babylas, who perished in the Decian persecution. Chrysostom[3] tells how Babylas excluded from the Church 'a certain Emperor' unnamed, who had murdered his own son. If Philip is meant, the description is incorrect. Philostorgius[4] tells a similar story of Decius or Numerianus.[5] The statement of Eusebius that Origen wrote to Philip and Severa is probably true; the rest of the story rests upon nothing but floating tradition of a most vague and contradictory kind. Philip may have been acquainted with Christianity to some degree, for there was a Church at Bostra, which is said to have been his native place, and, in spite of the dark act by which he secured the purple, he was not an immoral man, for he endeavoured to suppress by law the worst of Roman vices.[6] But we know that he celebrated the secular games with great pomp, and there was even persecution at Alexandria during his reign,[7] a full year before the accession of Decius, which Philip could certainly have suppressed, though probably he did not instigate it. Upon the whole we may place him side by side with Alexander Severus as not unfriendly to Christianity, but he cannot be regarded as an open convert, nor even as a secret believer.

Philip preserved his life and position till the autumn of 249. At that time the Empire was in imminent peril from the Goths on the lower Danube, and the Danubian legions felt the need of a strong and warlike Emperor. They proclaimed their captain Decius Emperor.[8] Decius marched immediately upon Rome, met Philip near Verona, and defeated him. Philip was killed in the battle; his son and destined successor was murdered by the garrison of Rome. In 251 Decius met the army of the Goths

[1] *H. E.* vi. 34. [2] *Chron. Pasch*, Bonn ed., i, p. 503.
[3] *De S. Babyla contra Iulianum et Gentes*, vol. ii, p. 542, ed. Montfaucon.
[4] vii. 8. [5] See the article on 'Philippus' in the *D. C. B.*
[6] *Vita Heliogabali*, 32; *Vita Alexandri Severi*, 24. [7] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 40.
[8] His full name is G. Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius. He is said to have been born at Bubalia (Aur. Victor, *Epit.* 29. 1), or Budalia (Eutr. 9. 4), a village in Lower Pannonia, near Sirmium.

under their king Kniva, gained some successes, but was finally defeated, and perished on the field with his son Herennius Etruscus.[1] He was the first Emperor who died fighting against a foreign enemy upon Roman soil.

In the place of the fallen Emperor the army elected C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, the governor of Moesia. Gallus was strongly suspected of having carried on a treacherous correspondence with the Goths and thereby caused the ruin of Decius, and it was perhaps with the object of refuting this charge that he adopted Hostilianus, the younger son of Decius, as co-regent. Hostilianus died of the plague towards the end of 251, and thereupon Volusianus, son of Gallus, was made Augustus by his father. Shortly after this Kniva renewed his invasion, but was defeated by the new governor of Moesia, M. Aemilius Aemilianus, a Moor. Gallus alone felt little joy in the triumph, discerning in the victorious general a dangerous rival to the throne. He superseded Aemilianus by Valerian, sent the latter to carry on the war against the Goths, and remained himself in Rome, partly perhaps in order not to endanger the lives of himself and his son, partly to take active measures against the plague which was raging in the capital. Aemilianus was proclaimed by his troops and marched at once against Rome. About the same time Valerian was proclaimed in Rhaetia. There ensued a scene of wild confusion. Gallus and his son were murdered by their own soldiers at Interamnae, while preparing to march against Aemilianus. Aemilianus, who had disgusted his officers by promising to restore the Senate to power, was murdered in his camp at Spoletium when he had all but entered Rome, and Valerian became Emperor.

Valerian belonged to the old Roman nobility and was at the time of his elevation almost sixty-three years old. He was an experienced and capable man and enjoyed the highest repute for justice and probity. Decius, finding himself more than sufficiently occupied with the Gothic war, seems to have conceived the unprecedented plan of devolving upon him the whole of the civil administration.

[1] Before August 29, 251; for the date see Schiller, i, p. 807.

He desired the Senate to nominate a censor with extraordinary powers, and when he heard (he was then in camp) that their choice had fallen upon Valerian, accepted their decision with enthusiasm. Valerian modestly protested, arguing that the power bestowed upon him properly belonged to the Emperor, and that the times were so corrupt that a real censor would not be tolerated. But he finally suffered himself to be overruled, and accepted the novel office.

The Senate saw in Valerian 'a living example of antiquity'. Decius invested him with the power of making laws, and with the supervision of the lives of all men, excepting from his jurisdiction only the prefect of the city, the ordinary consuls, the *rex sacrorum*, and the eldest of the Vestal Virgins. With these personal exceptions, the conduct of all men, whether civilians or soldiers, whether private individuals or officials, was subjected to the control of this severe and upright magistrate. Religion, of course, would be the first of his cares. It is not improbable that the persecution which ensued was from first to last the work of this excellent but most unfortunate man. It will be observed that the persecution was rigorous under Decius, slackened under Gallus, revived shortly after the accession of Valerian, and ceased with his disappearance from the scene.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE DECIAN PERSECUTION

The persecution which we may call the Decian, though in Egypt it began a year before that Emperor's accession and lasted until the reign of Gallienus, was the severest trial that the Church had as yet been called to endure, the first planned and deliberate attempt to exterminate Christianity. We shall gather some valuable light upon the subject if we first cast a glance upon the contemporary *Carmen Apologeticum* of the poet Commodian.[1]

The piece is highly remarkable for several reasons. It is the first Christian poem. It is written by a man of the people for the people, and therefore in vulgar Latin in hexameter verses governed not by quantity but by accent; hence the text is extremely corrupt, not being defended by the invaluable safeguard of prosody.[2] Again, it is the first primer containing a brief abstract of Old Testament history, followed by a sketch of Christian doctrine. It was probably intended to supply the place of Bible reading, which was no doubt uncommon among the laity. Again, it is the first attempt to find in the history of the present a key to the Apocalypse.[3] The persecutions of the Church are fore-

[1] See the text in Dom Pitra's *Spicilegium Solesmense*, vol. i, p. 20. Ebert assigned 249 as the date of the *Carmen*. Harnack, *Chronologie*, ii, p. 433 sqq., is undecided, and thinks that it may have been written at any time between 260 and 350. I will only observe that all the circumstances fit very well with the date given by Ebert, and that at no other time does it seem possible for a Christian to have expected deliverance at the hands of a Gothic king from a persecution actually in being.

[2] Two instances of Commodian's hexameters will suffice:—

'Agricola doctus tempestiva longa dinoscit;'

or,

'Quis modum relinquet (iudices estote de ipsis).'

Many similar verses will be found in epitaphs given in the *C. I. L.*

[3] Hippolytus used the Apocalypse largely in the *Commentary on Daniel*, but mainly to confirm views derived from Daniel. He wrote also a treatise on

shadowed by the seven last plagues. That of Decius is the seventh and final trial which ushers in the Day of Judgement and end of all things.[1] Commodian finds a further proof of the imminence of the end in chiliasm. The world is to last six days of a thousand years each. God revealed Himself to Abraham at the close of the third. Two more elapsed before the foundation of Rome, and the thousandth anniversary of the city had but just been celebrated by Philip in 248. This event must have caused a profound agitation in the minds of all Christians.

The prophecy with which the poem comes to an end is by no means easy to explain in detail. The text is corrupt and Commodian's mind was not clear. The Goths will break across the Danube, headed by their king Apolion, in whom we seem to recognize Kniva, the vanquisher of Decius. He will capture Rome, stop the persecution, and feed the Christians. But Apolion's power will endure but for five months. He will be succeeded by Cyrus, who is identified with Nero, who formerly slew Peter and Paul in the city, and comes back in person just before the end of the world from secret places where he was reserved for this purpose. He will take as his assistants two Caesars, and with them will issue edicts to all governors, commanding all men to offer incense to the gods, and to appear with crowns upon their heads, that none may hide himself. Nero will reign for three years and a half, when he will be deposed because he oppressed all men with unendurable taxes. Then a great king will arise in the East, followed by a huge army of the four peoples, Persians, Medes, Chaldaeans, and Babylonians, and by thousands of ships. He will slay Nero and the two partners of his guilt, and by him will the Apocalyptic prophecy of the destruction of Rome be accomplished. Yet the time is short, for he

the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, but did not regard the Apocalyptic prophecies as concerned with the present. See below, p. 347.

[1] The six earlier persecutions were those of Nero, Domitian, Trajan, M. Aurelius, Severus, and Maximin. When the event proved that the troubles of the Church were still not finished, the interpreters fell back upon the ten plagues of Egypt, and reckoned Diocletian as the tenth and last persecutor.

too is Nero and Antichrist; after his downfall God will summon from beyond Persia the lost tribes, who have been guarded in an earthly paradise, eating no flesh, offering no bloody sacrifice, neither marrying nor giving in marriage. They will be established in the holy city of Jerusalem, and then will come the first Resurrection and the reign of the saints on earth.

It is needless to discuss all the difficulties in this singular vaticination. It was apparently written very shortly after the outbreak of the persecution; else the author would hardly have proclaimed that it would last but three years and a half. The first Nero may be Decius, whose origin was almost unknown; the two Caesars allied with him may be his two sons, Q. Herennius Etruscus and C. Valerius Hostilianus, who were both Augusti.[1] The general drift of the prophecy is sufficiently clear. One feature of the persecution is very accurately described—the way in which the citizens in each town were paraded in long lines before the imperial inquisitors lest any should escape.[2] But what perilous dreams were these. Bitter complaint, not only of persecution but of grinding taxation; Christians looking hopefully for deliverance to Kniva and to Sapor, the two most formidable enemies of the empire; and expecting, if not exulting over, the approaching destruction of the Eternal City by a swarm of Orientals.

Commodian alone, so far as we know, spoke of Goths and Persians. But for many years Christians had been poring over the prophecies of Scripture, and these certainly were held to forebode the downfall of Rome. This was one of the reasons why Hippolytus published his Commentary on Daniel. He acknowledged that the frequent rise of pretenders to the throne was an ominous sign,[3] but still urged prudence and patience. He quotes the warning that no man knoweth the day or the hour; and the other

[1] See Schiller, i, p. 805.

[2] Dionysius of Alexandria—in Eusebius, *H. E.* vi. 41. 11—states that all officials were called up by name, and the same rule appears to have been applied to all ranks and ages. Even a little child whose parents had fled was carried by its wet-nurse before the inquisition; Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 25.

[3] *On Daniel*, iv. 6, Berlin ed., p. 198.

warning that the Second Advent will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night. Yet he thinks, rather inconsistently, that there is a method by which the secret may be wrested from Scripture by a competent exegete. Like Commodian he is a chiliast, but he works out the sum so as to arrive at a different conclusion. Christ, he says, was born *anno mundi* 5500. The End, therefore, is not to be expected before A.D. 500. He adds to this calculation a view derived from St. Paul's second Epistle to the Thessalonians. There is that which 'letteth' the revelation of Antichrist, and this obstacle is the Roman Empire. It follows from this interpretation that the Church ought to pray, as Tertullian also held, for the prosperity of Caesar and the republic of Rome. Thus it was possible to be a Christian and yet a loyal subject.[1] Nevertheless every indignant or impatient bishop could interpret the prophecies as he pleased. Chiliasm could be adapted easily to any result, and these dreams were in all probability one of the causes of the persecution.

Add to this dread of disloyalty at a time when the Empire seemed to be in its agony, a strong reaction against the Syrian ways of Elagabalus and even of Alexander, fear of the plague which was making terrible ravages, and the appointment of a censor who took his office in the most serious light, and was bent upon saving society by forcing all men back into the good old Roman ways, and we can see reasons enough for a determined effort to reform or extirpate those who might be thought the declared enemies both of Caesar and of the gods. When Eusebius says [2] that Decius adopted an antichristian policy out of hatred for Philip, he is right only to this extent, that the two Emperors represented different types of character. Philip was an Oriental, and shared the eclecticism of Alexander Severus. Decius, if not a Roman by birth, was a Western, and in disposition a Roman aristocrat of the old stock, whose sympathies lay with that powerful party in the Senate which still represented the Augustan and Virgilian tradition.

[1] *On Daniel*, iv. 21. p. 238, sqq.

[2] *H. E.* vi. 39.

The Decian edict was published in December, 249, or early in January, 250. The original document is not extant and its exact language is therefore unknown. It seems not unlikely that it was issued in the joint names of Decius as Emperor and of Valerian as censor. Further, it is possible that it was in form a proclamation of a general thanksgiving for certain victories, which marked the opening of the Gothic War, and for an abundant harvest, which had taken away the dread of famine and relieved the Empire of one of its most pressing anxieties. 'Supplications' of this kind had always been decreed from time to time, and the ordinance fixed a day on which the members of each tribe should appear with crowns upon their heads to take their part in offering the prescribed sacrifice. Such an order, if rigidly enforced, would in itself have ensured the detection and punishment of all sincere Christians. It was carried out with great severity. At Carthage the whole population appears to have been paraded before the proconsul and five of the chief citizens acting as his assessors.[1] Either in the text of the edict, or in the instructions sent with it to the governors, there appear to have been particular directions that no Christian should be allowed to evade his duty. Whether there was any special mention of bishops or clergy is doubtful. A letter from the Church of Rome gives us to understand that 'persons of consequence'[2] might well think that they had special reasons for fear, but the phrase will cover wealthy laymen as well as officers of the Church.

The edict of Decius produced an effect which for the moment was almost crushing. The Church had been making great progress, there were great numbers of converts in her ranks, and her moral sinews were relaxed by an almost complete cessation of persecution. Cyprian speaks of a peace of thirty years. Thus the stress of the trial fell suddenly upon an army of which only a small portion knew what warfare meant. At Alexandria, a year before the promulgation of the edict, some fiery pagan devotee had stirred up a popular crusade against the

[1] Cyp. *Ep.* 43. 3.

[2] 'Personae insignes,' Cyp. *Ep.* 8. 1.

Christians. The authorities did not interfere, and for some months the mob burned, plundered, and killed without restraint. Four persons were cruelly murdered, houses were gutted, and it was not safe for a Christian to venture into the streets either by day or by night. This lawless reign of terror was at last stopped, not by any action of the magistrates, but by civil war, which broke out in the unhappy city during the unsettlement which accompanied the downfall of Philip. Almost immediately after this was published the edict of Decius, and a new terror ensued 'sufficient,' says the bishop Dionysius, 'to scandalize, if it were possible, even the elect'. Numbers denied the faith, some at once, some after a longer or shorter term of imprisonment; many were put to death. Among the latter were five soldiers, of whom one had exerted himself to save the martyrs whom he was escorting to the stake from the ill usage of the rabble; the others had in open court, before the prefect and his assessors, encouraged the prisoners on trial to stand fast in their refusal to do sacrifice. There could be no more alarming sign of the danger and futility of the persecution than this, that even the army, the masters and makers of the Emperor himself, were beginning to harbour the opinions which could not be suppressed without their willing assistance. Even in the cities and villages of Egypt the Christians were hunted out and destroyed. Many fled into the desert and the mountains. Some of them were never heard of again, others were captured by the wild tribes of Saracens and reduced to slavery. It may be observed that, of the two letters of Bishop Dionysius from which this information is derived, the first was written to Germanus to explain and justify his own flight from Alexandria; while the second, to Fabian of Antioch, is a plea for lenity towards those who had fallen. The Alexandrian martyrs 'who now sit by the side of Christ and judge with Him', had taken compassion upon these unhappy beings, and, being convinced of the sincerity of their repentance, had admitted them without delay to communion.[1] Eusebius quotes also another letter,[2]

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 40–42. [2] vi. 45.

in which this excellent man addressed Novatian, beseeching him to renounce his uncharitable rigour. 'Bear anything,' he says, 'rather than divide the Church of God. Martyrdom in the cause of unity is no less glorious than martyrdom as a protest against idolatry, nay, in my opinion it is more glorious.' The good bishop had learned through his own sufferings to deal mercifully with those whose courage failed.

At Carthage the state of things was much the same as at Alexandria; the details we may put upon one side for the present as the history of Cyprian calls for a chapter to itself. At Rome Pope Fabian was executed on January 20, 250.[1] Two priests, Moyses and Maximus, two deacons, Rufinus and Nicostratus, were imprisoned, and with them a number of others, both men and women.[2] Many of them died of ill usage in their dungeons, the rest were released in the spring of 251, when it was at last judged safe to elect Cornelius in succession to Fabian after an interval of fifteen months. The government appears as a rule to have selected its victims, making numerous examples, especially in Egypt, but relying generally upon threats and the rigours of imprisonment in the unsanitary jails of antiquity; in these pest-houses many succumbed. Torture appears not to have been ordered in this edict, nevertheless it was in some cases applied, and there was much ill usage by mobs and lower officials. At Smyrna the bishop Euctemon and a number of his people abjured; Pionius and some others were arrested while celebrating the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. Pionius was burnt, and with him a Marcionite priest named Metrodorus; the others were imprisoned, but eventually released. At Antioch Bishop Babylas, at Jerusalem Bishop Alexander, died in

[1] Fabian must have been well known to the authorities. He had applied for and had received a licence to transport to Rome the body of the last Pope but one, Pontianus, who had died in the mines in Sardinia, and had gone with his clergy to receive the body at Ostia. During his own episcopacy the city was divided ecclesiastically into seven regions administered by seven deacons, and the cemetery of Callistus had been considerably enlarged. Aubé, *L'Église et l'État*, p. 39.

[2] See the names in Cyp. *Epp.* 21, 22, 31, 32; the list is not given as complete.

prison. Origen was also incarcerated and treated with such severity that he died shortly after his release. The martyrologists add a number of other names, some of them unknown to the historians, Maximus, Conon, Saturninus of Toulouse, Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonice.[1] But not all governors executed the edict with inflexible rigour. There is a strange story about Achatius, bishop of an unknown see in Asia. He was arrested and brought before Martianus, whose interrogations he answered with manly directness and a certain humour, which we should appreciate better if the text of the *Acta* were not so corrupt. Martianus took the unusual course of reporting the case to the Emperor, and Decius is said to have been so much amused by the account of the scene in court that he ordered Achatius to be released and troubled no more. The story is so singular that it may possibly be true. Other officials saw in the persecution mainly an opportunity for making a little money. It was usual to give those who had sacrificed in obedience to the edict a written certificate of the fact to save them from further annoyance. But any Christian who was wealthy and not troubled by scruples could easily buy this certificate or *libellus* without appearing before the magistrate at all. There were thousands of these *libellatici* in the Carthaginian Church alone.[2] The phrase *libellatici* is not used except in connexion with the African persecution, but the practice was very common. Of the three *libelli* which have come down to us all are Egyptian.[3] They are all family affidavits, all written by the petitioners; all declare that the persons in question are and always have been pagans, and all request the signature of the commissioners. The commissioners included heathen priests, as we learn from the *Acta Pionii*, and recusants

[1] On the historical value of Passionaries generally see the admirable little book of Father Delehaye, *Les Légendes hagiographiques*; Harnack, *Chronologie*, ii, p. 463 sqq. Some of the texts may be read in Ruinart, but much has been done in this branch of learning since his time, and the best collection, as far as it goes, is the *Acta Martyrum Selecta* of O. von Gebhardt.

[2] Cyp. *Ep.* 20. 2.

[3] See one of them in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. iv, p. 658; two others in Gebhardt, *Acta Martyrum Selecta*.

were sent for final judgement before the Roman governor. Two of these *libelli* belong to the first year of Decius. The date of the others is no doubt the same, but can no longer be read.

The first act of the persecution lasted a little more than a year, and ended with the life of the Emperor, or even a little before. It is a speaking sign of the confusion of the times that an exact date for the death of Decius cannot be given. The year was 251, and the battle of Abritum seems to have been fought in the summer, whether early or late is not known.[1] The reign of Gallus began formally about September, 251, and ended in May or June, 253. Aemilianus, who succeeded him, retained his power and his life only about three months and a half. If the edict of Decius was, as has been suggested, in form an order for a general supplication, it would expire with its author, and the laws with respect to Christianity would revert to their normal condition. Gallus took no exceptional measures, but he permitted the law to take its course and did not discourage persecutions. Pope Cornelius was arrested, and died in prison at Centumcellae in June, 253, after a captivity of some months; Lucius, his successor, was also incarcerated, but almost immediately released, either by Gallus or by Aemilianus,[2] and there were other sufferers.[3] But in those disastrous times it was difficult to avoid measures which had the effect, if not the intention, of persecution. The Oriental plague was raging with fearful violence, and Gallus, who was in Rome devising means for checking the disease, when he ought to have been in the camp and watching the traitors who were conspiring against his life and throne, issued orders that sacrifices should be offered to propitiate the anger of the gods.[4] The effect was to reproduce the edict of Decius. There were public outcries against the Christians, who were obliged to stand aloof while the whole Empire was appealing to Heaven for mercy in their dire need. They were suspected even of having

[1] Schiller, i, p. 807.
[2] Duchesne, *Histoire de l'Église*, i, p. 373.
[3] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 2.
[4] Cyp. *Ep.* 59. 6.

caused the plague and of rejoicing over its ravages. Fortunately the Church, by its admirable behaviour, disproved these calumnies. At Alexandria and Carthage especially the Christians had gone about among the sick with exemplary courage, generosity, and method, making no difference between the pagans and their own brethren. Probably this noble conduct earned for them the gratitude of the authorities; at any rate the crisis seems to have passed over without a renewal of the persecution, and we read of bishops assembling repeatedly in synods without molestation. Valerian, for the first three years of his reign, left the Church in peace. Dionysius[1] even asserts that he showed more favour to the Christians than any previous Emperor, and that his household was so full of believers that it was like a Church.[2] Valerian felt no personal animosity towards Christians and valued highly their fidelity and rectitude. But the political situation was worse than ever. The Empire was like a stag at bay beset by the hounds on every side. Franks and Alamanni overran Gaul and Spain, and even the north of Italy. Marcomanni, Burgundians, and a number of other German tribes, swarmed across the Danube, and raided Greece and Asia Minor. Africa was devastated by the Moors, and Persia was in arms in the East. And all the while the plague, which lasted for fifteen years from its first outbreak in the reign of Decius, continued its ravages.[3] This horrible scene of confusion and disaster induced Valerian once more to try the desperate policy of Decius and Gallus. If the whole Empire would join in prayer to the national gods some deliverance might be vouchsafed.[4]

In 257 Valerian launched his first edict. Its terms may be accurately gathered from the processes against Dionysius

[1] In his letter to Hermammon, in Eus. *H. E.* vii. 10.

[2] Much the same thing might be said of Diocletian.

[3] See Schiller, i, p. 811 sqq.

[4] Dionysius, in Eus. *H. E.* vii. 10, asserts that he was perverted by Macrianus; but he is probably in error. He calls Macrianus the *Rationalis*, a fiscal official. But Macrianus was a distinguished soldier, afterwards one of the Thirty Tyrants; see the *Augustan History*, 23. 12. And there is some evidence to show that Valerian had been the real author of the persecution of Decius.

and Cyprian; in both cases we have the actual official report.

Dionysius[1] was summoned with four of his clergy to appear before Aemilianus, the prefect of Egypt[2]; Cyprian before the proconsul, Aspasius Paternus. They were treated with much consideration. They were called upon not to renounce their faith, but to respect the ceremonies of the Roman religion.[3] But they were also ordered to hold no meetings for public worship, and not to enter the cemeteries. Cyprian was also required to supply a list of his priests, but refused to do so, and the demand was not pressed, the proconsul saying that he could find out their names and addresses for himself. In the result both bishops were ordered to go into exile, Dionysius to Kephro, on the borders of Libya, Cyprian to Curubis.

What is noticeable in this first edict is not its novelty, but its archaism. Valerian modelled it upon the lines of the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*.[4] What he proposed to himself was not to destroy Christianity, but merely to enforce outward conformity to the law. He fell into precisely the same error as Decius and Gallus; indeed the error was probably his own device. Christians were not to be compelled to curse Christ, but merely to do what other people did. It is strange that with all his learning and experience he had not realized the impossibility of this course, which to a heathen seemed so easy and sensible. From the old *Senatus Consultum* are drawn also the attack upon places of worship, the express prohibition of assembling for worship without licence, and the attempt to destroy

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 11.

[2] Perhaps we should rather say the acting prefect: he is called in the *Acta* ὁ διέπων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν. The names of the companions of Dionysius are twice given, and the lists do not exactly agree. In the letter five are given, in the *Acta* four. One of them was from Rome, and had possibly been sent to warn Dionysius.

[3] This is distinctly stated in the *Acta Proconsularia*. Cyprian, ed. Hartel, vol. i, pp. cx sqq. 'Sacratissimi imperatores Valerianus et Gallienus litteras ad me dare dignati sunt quibus praeceperunt eos qui Romanam religionem non colunt, debere Romanas caeremonias recognoscere.' But cp. Dionysius in Eus. *H. E.* vii. 11.

[4] See above, p. 25.

the priesthood. The cemeteries were closed because it was the habit of the Church to assemble there to keep the anniversaries of the dead, and in particular of the martyrs, and thus to glorify the victims of the law and keep up the spirit of defiance. Both cemeteries and churches appear from the edict of Gallienus[1] to have been not merely shut up, but confiscated.

The second edict of Valerian was issued in 258, about the time when the Emperor held his great council of war at Byzantium[2] to concert measures for the defence of the republic during his absence on the Persian campaign. Cyprian gives us a clear account of its provisions.[3] Bishops, priests, and deacons were to be put to death. Senators and such knights as were *viri egregii*[4] were to forfeit their dignity and property, and, on a repetition of the offence, their lives also. Married women were subjected to confiscation and sent into exile, but in their case the death penalty was expressly abolished.[5] Lastly, *Caesariani*, members of the Emperor's domestic or official household, were to lose their property and be sent to work in chains upon the Imperial estates. What was to happen to *tenuiores* in general is not said. There were summary methods of dealing with such people; but possibly Valerian thought that, if all Christians of wealth and consequence were forced to submit, the common herd might be left out of account. Again, how did Valerian propose to deal with unmarried women? Were the virgins of the Church to escape scot-free?

The clergy were to be handled with ruthless severity; otherwise the edict manifests a desire to avoid effusion of blood. There was to be no employment of torture to enforce recantation. The distinctions of class and of penalties are a novel feature, implying that the higher ranks of society, if they forsook the gods of their fathers, deserved sharper punishment than the poor and ignorant, and also

[1] *H. E.* vii. 13. [2] See Schiller, i, p. 819. [3] *Ep.* 80.

[4] On this title see Seeck, *Untergang der antiken Welt*, ii, pp. 315, 560.

[5] Perpetua, who was a married woman, had even been thrown to the beasts.

that many Christians were to be found among the hereditary or official nobility.

Among the victims of the second edict were Pope Xystus and four of his deacons; they were put to death in the catacomb of Praetextatus, where they were holding a service, on August 6.[1] Two others, Felicissimus and Agapitus, were slain a day or two later, and on August 10 Laurence was burnt alive. Thus the whole of the diaconal college was extinguished. In Spain Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, was burnt with his two deacons, Eulogius and Augurius. In Africa Cyprian perished, and in the following year Montanus, Lucius, and others were put to death in the proconsular province, Jacobus and Marianus in Numidia.

In the East we find few traces of the enforcement of the second edict. Dionysius, after a prolonged and harsh banishment, was permitted to return to Alexandria. Of four martyrs mentioned by Eusebius,[2] three, Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander, were peasants who, in their eagerness for the heavenly crown, denounced themselves at Caesarea in Palestine. They were all thrown to the beasts, and a nameless woman, belonging to the sect of Marcion, shared their fate.

In 260 Valerian was captured by the Persians and disappeared from history. Shortly afterwards his son Gallienus, who, by the removal of his father, became sole Emperor, issued an edict putting a stop to the persecution. The Christians were permitted to resume possession of their churches and cemeteries and granted full liberty of worship. Dionysius and other bishops could not believe the good tidings, or in the confusion of the times the edict was not at once sent to their locality, possibly because Macrianus still held the eastern provinces. They wrote to the Emperor, who in reply sent them an abstract of the edict.[3]

Some time after this happened the martyrdom of Marinus.[4] He was a soldier of merit, and the post of centurion being vacant, was selected to fill the place. But a jealous rival, who desired the vinestaff for himself, denounced him as a

[1] See Benson's *Cyprian*, p. 487 sqq.
[2] *H. E.* vii. 12.
[3] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 13.
[4] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 15.

Christian and therefore disqualified. The commandant Achaeus sent for Marinus, and demanded whether the charge was true, and, on his confession, gave him three hours for consideration. Outside the court Theotecnus, the Bishop of Caesarea, met him, drew him into the church, placed him before the altar, and bade him make his choice there and then between the sword and the Gospel. Marinus chose the Gospel, returned into court, announced his determination, and was instantly led away and beheaded.

There were many Christian soldiers in the army, and their officers must have treated them generally with forbearance and taken care not to drive them into a corner. But a harsh martinet could at any moment make the demands of the service and the demands of the Church irreconcilable. Marinus died by military law for a military offence, and the edicts of Valerian do not seem to have been in question at all. As to the date, Theotecnus became Bishop of Caesarea in 260, and the martyrdom occurred after this; how long after we do not know.

From the date of the edict of Gallienus the Church enjoyed peace until Diocletian once more drew the sword in 303. Aurelian indeed is said[1] to have determined to order a new proscription, but the plan, if he ever entertained it, was frustrated by his own death in 275.

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 30. 20; Lactantius, *De Mort. Persec.* 6.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CYPRIAN

The life of Cyprian is so closely connected with history ecclesiastical and secular at a most important juncture that it deserves a chapter to itself.

Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus[1] began life as a rhetorical professor at Carthage, which may have been his native town.[2]

To the Rhetoric school Cyprian owed his fluent, lucid, cultivated style. No one in his time wrote such good Latin. But he was not a profound thinker, and his intellectual equipment was greatly inferior to that of Irenaeus, or Hippolytus, or Tertullian, not to speak of Clement or Origen. He belongs to the class of administrators, and it is from this point of view that he should be judged, when we are thinking, not of his religious character, but of his place in history.

Another point, not unconnected with his emotional artistic temperament, is that he was a prophet. Constantly he appeals to the visions by which he was guided in all the most important of his decisions. In obedience to a vision he fled from the persecution of Decius,[3] and in his exile he lived sur-

[1] One of his opponents, Puppianus, seems to imply that either the name Thascius or the name Cyprianus did not properly belong to him and addressed him as 'Cyprianus qui et Thascius'. Cyprian retorted by addressing his correspondent as 'Florentius qui et Puppianus' (superscription to *Ep.* 66), but does not explain the meaning of this little passage of arms. By the Roman authorities he is called at one time Caecilius Cyprianus, *Ep.* 66, at another Thascius Cyprianus, *Acta Proconsularia*, 4.

[2] Probably he had not been a practising barrister. The professor and the advocate were as a rule distinct (a rhetorician who did not practise at bar was called *scholasticus*; see Pliny's account of Isaeus, *Epp.* ii. 3), though some combined both attributes. If in this earlier stage Cyprian had delivered harangues against Christianity or in favour of idolatry, he may have done so either in the *fictae causae* of the schools or in those panegyrics or orations on public occasions, for which he would constantly be called upon.

[3] *Ep.* 16. 4: but cp. Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 85 n.

rounded by prophets, many of them children whose innocent age he thought to be especially favourable for revelations and celestial ecstasies.[1] Here we find a trait which forms a link between Cyprian and Montanism. We have seen how rife was prophetism in the second century, and we have noticed the remarkable fact that in Tertullian and others this outburst of the Spirit of Freedom was turned to the advantage, not of increased liberty, but of more rigorous discipline.

For the rest, Cyprian was well-born, and either by inheritance or by the practice of his art possessed considerable wealth. His biographer[2] describes him as cheerful but dignified, and dressed as befitted his station without fashionable extravagance, but with self-respect and decorum. To the last he maintained intimate and affectionate relations with his pagan neighbours, who included some of the highest rank. These, when the tidings of the persecution of Valerian arrived, counselled him to go again into retreat and offered him the shelter of their own country houses.[3]

The reasons which drew him into the Church he has explained in his *Ad Donatum,* where he has drawn a dark picture of the disorder and licentiousness of the heathen world, the general sense of insecurity, and the gulf that was ever growing wider between rich and poor. What he dwells upon is the misery of society outside of the Church, and what he promises Donatus is that the Gospel will raise him up above all this sea of wretchedness.[4] It is the view of a philanthropist or statesman, of one who sees in the Church the only power capable of regenerating society. Probably even before his conversion Cyprian had lived a serious and upright life. At any rate we read of no such anguish of soul as Augustine experienced.

The instrument in his conversion was Caecilianus, an aged Carthaginian priest: Cyprian himself was not a young man.[5] He immediately sold for the benefit of the poor

[1] There seem to have been numerous prophets in the Church of Africa about this time. See the *Acta Perpetuae* and the *Passio SS. Mariani et Iacobi.*

[2] Pontius, *Vita,* 6. [3] Pontius, *Vita,* 14. [4] *Ad Don.* 6.

[5] Pontius says, *Vita,* 4, that after his conversion Cyprian treated Caecilian

some considerable portion of his landed estate, including his *horti* near Carthage. The latter was purchased by friends and restored to him.[1]

Immediately after his baptism Cyprian was ordained. Probably he became deacon; certainly he was for a time priest; in 248 on the death of Donatus he was elected Bishop of Carthage, as Pontius says,[2] 'by the judgement of God and the favour of the laity.' He refused the proffered dignity; but the people were determined to have him, and besieged his house till he gave his consent. Similar scenes recur not infrequently. The profession of reluctance and of yielding only to loving violence was probably in some cases only conventional and politic, but in others it was no doubt sincere. In the eyes of the laity Cyprian was marked out for the episcopate by devotion, education, social position, and wealth. He himself cannot have been unconscious of his great powers, and was not unwilling to accept an office which, though one of dignity and authority, brought him no emolument and exposed him to peril of his life.

But his elevation was highly irregular. In the first place he was a neophyte. Barely two years had elapsed since the new bishop was a heathen man and an enemy of the Church; thus his elevation involved a breach of the rule

'non iam ut amicum animae coaequalem sed tamquam novae vitae parentem'. Further, according to the rule laid down in the *Didascalia* and the *Constit. Apostolicae*, a bishop was not to be ordained before the age of fifty, and there is no indication that this rule was disregarded in the case of Cyprian, but the date of his birth is not on record. Even that of his conversion is not stated; it is, however, placed by Archbishop Benson in 246, barely two years before his elevation to the episcopate (Benson's *Cyprian*, p. 7).

[1] It would be interesting if we could explain a point which arises here. We often read of wealthy clergy bestowing their property, or large portions of it, upon the Church. On the other hand, the laws against wealthy men who refused to bear the onerous burden of service upon the town council were already severe. Cyprian certainly cannot have acted as decurion. How then did he escape the burden? Probably by making over great part of his property to the Church. The rest he appears to have placed in the hands of trustees; see *Ep.* 66. 4; this method of evasion was afterwards forbidden. Perhaps I may refer to the Excursus on this subject at the end of *The Church's Task under the Empire*.

[2] *Vita*, 5.

laid down by St. Paul.[1] But it was also unusual in form. Cyprian himself tells us what was the method generally employed. The neighbouring bishops of the same province were summoned to attend, the whole Church of the city in question was assembled, and the new bishop was elected in a plenary convocation of those over whom he was to bear rule. He was chosen by the whole brotherhood. The business of the invited bishops was to ascertain that the candidate was really the choice of the Church, and that his life was such as to justify the choice. Unless they were satisfied upon these points they could of course refuse to consecrate. This procedure, says Cyprian, constituted 'a legitimate and just ordination', and any other form was displeasing to God.[2] Now in the election of Cyprian the clergy seem to have been overwhelmed by the determination of the laity.

The election of Cyprian may be compared with that of Ambrose in later times. There were many rules for the election of bishops, but hardly any that might not be disregarded, if it seemed to be for the good of the Church that an exception should be made, and, when a wave of enthusiasm swept over the laity, their acclamations might be regarded as a *iudicium Dei* transcending all legal form. But the irregularity was unfortunate, and involved Cyprian in lifelong difficulties. A strong party, headed by five presbyters, refused to acknowledge him as their bishop and persistently opposed him.[3]

In virtue of his consecration Cyprian received the title of *Papa* or Pope. The designation had belonged to the Bishop of Carthage for nearly half a century at least.[4] But what were his ideas of the functions and powers of a bishop?

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 6.

[2] *Ep.* 67. 4, 5: compare the beginning of the *Canones Hippolyti* where the people are required to say 'We elect him'; Hauler, *Verona Fragments*, p. 14; Mrs. Gibson, *Didascalia*, p. 10.

[3] *Ep.* 43. 3, 59. 9. Who these particular five were is matter of dispute; see Benson, p. 110, note. There were many who sided with them.

[4] It is used for the first time of Optatus of Carthage in the *Acts of Perpetua* (chapter 13). About the same time it is applied by Tertullian to the Bishop of Rome (*De Pud.* 13). About the middle of the third century Heraclas of Alexandria is called *Papa* by Dionysius his successor; Eus. *H. E.* vii. 7. 4.

His theory is explained in his treatise *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*. All bishops he held to be equal, independent, and co-ordinate, each possessing in himself the whole power of the episcopate.[1] No single bishop, and indeed no number of bishops, had in Cyprian's view any jurisdiction over another, nor any power to coerce him.[2]

This does not mean that among this oligarchical body there are no degrees of honour or precedence, or, in the old Latin sense of the word, of *auctoritas*.[3] Star differs from star in glory, and of the stars of Christendom the chief is Peter, to whom the promise of the keys was given by Christ before He repeated it to the rest of the Apostles. In this sense the unity of the Church begins with Peter; and Rome, the chair of Peter, is the *principalis ecclesia*, a phrase borrowed from the Latin translation of Irenaeus. Yet Cyprian does not hesitate to withstand Pope Stephen on so important a question as that of rebaptism.[4]

In the West it came to be generally used of bishops—see indices to Prudentius and Sidonius Apollinarius—and even in the East it was common. It stands in the same relation to *episcopus* as our Father in God to bishop, that is to say it expresses not so much the official authority as the pastoral relation. See upon it Suicer; Pearson, *Vind. Ign.* I. xi. 2; Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* iii. 235, 268; Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 29.

[1] 5. 'Episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.' *In solidum* is a legal phrase. When two parties have borrowed and guaranteed the same sum of money both are responsible *in solidum* = for the whole, *Digest*, 45. 2. 2–3, the whole obligation rests upon both as in an unlimited company. A better illustration may be taken from the Roman collegiate magistracies, the tribunes, consuls, even in Cyprian's time the *imperium*; each wielded in his own person the whole power of the office.

[2] See especially *Ep.* 55. 17, 21. In Africa it had been warmly disputed whether adultery was or was not a death sin, for which there can be no forgiveness in the Church militant. Each bishop was allowed to retain his own opinion and practice, 'rationem propositi sui Domino redditurus'.

[3] The word *auctoritas* has been the source of infinite misunderstanding. Its English form is used to denote power to command and punish; thus we speak of the authority of the king or of a military officer. But the original Latin word expresses the moral weight of a person, whose character, ability, and experience are such that he has a right to speak. His opinion is not infallible, and may be rejected, but it must first be gravely considered.

[4] *De Unitate*, 4; *Ep.* 74. I regard the words added by some MSS. in the former passage as interpolations. They have been defended as belonging to a second edition of the treatise, revised by the hand of Cyprian himself, and exhibiting his later and better thoughts. The most significant of the interpolated phrases is 'et primatus Petro datur', where much turns upon the sense of the word *primatus*. If it means 'precedence' or *auctoritas* it expresses

In the view of Tertullian, Cyprian's 'Master', the clergy are the creatures of the Church, as they still are in the view of Jerome. But Cyprian adopts without hesitation the other opinion, that the bishop is the direct successor of the Apostles, and so of divine institution. Even in Clement of Rome we find a comparison drawn between the Jewish and the Christian hierarchy. The bishop corresponds to the High Priest, the presbyter to the priest, the deacon to the Levite. Cyprian regards this parallelism as an indisputable truth, and pushes it to its extreme practical conclusions. The bishop is the High Priest,[1] and sums up in himself all the privileges of the priestly order, so much so that Cyprian gives to him alone the title of *Sacerdos*.[2] Nothing in this is peculiar to Cyprian. It was the current belief of the time, and is to be found in the preface to the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus. Neither is there anything novel in Cyprian's conception of the powers of the bishop. His language is not really stronger than that of Ignatius, and what he says is what many others were saying in his own time. If he holds that 'he who listens to the bishop listens to God', that 'the bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop', that the bishop judges *vice Christi*, and that he who disobeys makes himself 'judge of the judge' and is rejected by God,[3] all this also is to be found in Hippolytus and the *Didascalia*. What is characteristic of Cyprian is merely the zeal with which he spurs his theory.

Yet, highly as Cyprian exalted his office, he can hardly be called a monarchic bishop. Or shall we say that the position which he gives the bishop is that of an Homeric or a tribal chief? He is responsible to no other potentate,

the universal opinion; if it means 'jurisdiction' it does not; but the interpolator apparently meant it to be taken in the latter sense. Compare the addition made in the old Latin version to the sixth canon of Nicaea. See Dom Chapman in *Revue Bénédictine* for July and October, 1902, and January, 1903; Harnack in *Theol. Litteraturzeitung* for April 25, 1903; Watson in *J. T. S.*, vol. v, p. 432.

[1] *Ep.* 66. 3.

[2] It is probable that he never speaks of a presbyter as *sacerdos*; see Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 33.

[3] *Ep.* 59, 66.

yet there is an authority which he must respect, that of his own people. He receives his power directly from heaven, but he is elected by the Church. He is absolute as judge, but nothing serious is to be done without the information and advice of the assembled Church, clergy, and laity. This again is not peculiar to Cyprian. But he maintains further that as the Church elects the bishop, it is their duty, if the bishop falls into sin, to leave and depose him. His sacrifice will not be received by God, and will contaminate all those who partake of it. In fact Cyprian's view is not unlike Wyclif's Dominion of Grace. A wicked bishop losing the grace of God loses all the powers bestowed upon him.[1] There were others, especially in the East, who entertained this opinion.

The persecution of Decius produced the same results at Carthage as at Alexandria. There was universal terror and very general defection. Cyprian himself fled into hiding, and endeavoured to rule his diocese as best he could from his place of concealment. He is not to be blamed for his flight. Withdrawal from persecution was in fact the rule of Eastern bishops, who appealed with confidence to the command of our Lord;[2] and he could allege the examples of Polycarp, Clement, Origen, Dionysius, Gregory Thaumaturgus. In the West the sterner view prevailed. Tertullian insisted with fiery vehemence that a bishop should remain at his post. The see of Rome was vacant by the martyrdom of Fabian, and the clergy of the city wrote a letter to the clergy of Carthage which Cyprian might very well interpret as one of rebuke.[3] He professed that he could not believe the letter to be genuine,[4] told his people that he was staying away lest the Gentiles should be provoked to shed blood,[5] and that he had been ordered to depart by a revelation.[6] He sent money and good advice, and wrote to encourage the martyrs.[7] His conduct, though not heroic, certainly admits of excuse. But those who shrink from pain should be extremely merciful to those who share their weakness. Now Cyprian, from his safe retreat, sent orders that certain

[1] *Ep.* 67. 1, 2. [2] Matthew x. 13. [3] *Ep.* 8. [4] *Ep.* 9. 2.
[5] *Ep.* 7. [6] *Ep.* 16. 4; cp. p. 359, note 3. [7] *Ep.* 10.

clergy who had fled like himself, but immediately repented and returned to their duty, should be deprived of the usual allowance until, after his return, they were examined and judged with those who had denied the faith.[1] He would not have wished the same measure to be dealt out to himself, though his offence was surely greater than theirs. And, though we may excuse Cyprian's flight, his absence from Carthage greatly aggravated the difficulties of the position.

At Carthage no one appears to have been executed by formal sentence. Torture and the jail were found quite sufficient, indeed they were practically equivalent. Mappalicus and Paulus were tortured to death, and at least fifteen others perished of hunger, thirst, heat, and stenches in prison.[2] In the country districts the authorities seem to have done pretty much as they pleased. Numidicus and his wife were sent to the stake; the wife perished in the flames, the husband was half burnt, then stoned and left for dead.[3] Castus and Aemilius recanted, but recanted their recantation, and were burnt alive, perhaps at Carthage.[4] All kinds of torture were freely employed, even the most infamous. Maidens were threatened with the brothel,[5] though Cyprian does not assert that the menace was carried out. Thousands fell away, including at least one of the bishops, Repostus of Suturnuc.[6] Cyprian attributes these wholesale defections to the demoralization of the long peace. But there is really no need for explanation. Even among sincere Christians the martyr spirit is rare. Many will fly, even though flight involves the confiscation of all their worldly goods; few will defy torture and the hangman. Most will break down, and of these the greater part will endure the inexpressible pangs which the feeling of cowardice at a supreme moral crisis burns upon the soul even of those who are not conspicuously moral.

This was what happened at Carthage. Some of the lapsed, like Castus and Aemilius, rushed back to wipe out their offence by martyrdom; others besieged the clergy with prayers for readmission into the Church, fearing

[1] *Ep.* 34. 4. [2] *Ep.* 22. [3] *Ep.* 40.
[4] *De Lapsis*, 13. [5] *De Mortalitate*, 15. [6] *Ep.* 59. 10.

lest they should die unreconciled, and so be cast into gehenna. Of these a very large number fortified themselves with *libelli*, or letters of indulgence from the martyrs or confessors directing the bearers to be received back into communion, sometimes with, sometimes without, any recognition of the authority of the bishop. Such *libelli* had been very freely dispensed to individuals and to whole families. Finally Lucian, in the name of all the confessors, sent notice to Cyprian that 'peace' had been given by them to all the *lapsi*, providing only that the bishop was satisfied that they had not fallen into fresh sin since the indulgence was given.[1]

Here we approach a most important question, or series of questions, which had been troubling the Church since the first century and were brought to a head by the persecution of Decius.

What powers of forgiveness were bestowed by Christ upon His Church in respect of post-baptismal sin? Were there some sins which could not be forgiven at all? If not, if the mercy of Christ knew no exceptions, by whom was the pardon bestowed? Could it be given by the confessors, or only by the Church acting through its representative, the bishop? And, if it were allowed, must it be earned by penance, and ought that penance to be heavy or light?

Even in the time of Hermas there were those who maintained that death sins, especially apostasy, could not be remitted on earth, but must be left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. This had been the opinion of the Montanists, and of Tertullian after he became a Montanist. It was still widely held, by Novatian and many others, at Carthage and elsewhere. Others maintained that Christ had left with the Church full power to give absolution for all sins without exception. On this view the only mortal sin was that of refusing to submit to the judgement of the Church. There had always been those who believed that this was the true interpretation of the Gospel; it was the teaching at this time of the Roman clergy, of Dionysius

[1] *Ep.* 23.

of Alexandria, and probably of the majority of bishops, and of Cyprian himself, though but a year or so before he had leaned to the view of Novatian.[1]

Down to this time the confessor had enjoyed extraordinary privileges. In the *Canons of Hippolytus* a confessor who has endured to the effusion of blood is treated as *ipso facto* a priest, able therefore to bind or to loose. This power the confessors had exercised at Lyons with the sanction of Irenaeus, and were exercising at this very time at Alexandria with the approval of Dionysius. But Rome and Cyprian insisted that absolution must in all cases be given by the bishop alone sitting in council with the whole body of his Church. He might, or he might not, attach some weight to the indulgence granted by a confessor. It is evident how greatly this decision increased the authority of the bishops.

All agreed that absolution must be preceded by definite proof of repentance: that is to say according to existing notions by penance. But ought this to be prolonged and severe, or ought it to be made as light as possible? There were great differences of practice. The West inclined to deal severely, but the *Didascalia* admitted even the most heinous offenders to absolution after a discipline of a few weeks, rarely exceeding seven.

All these difficulties were now to be settled.

Cyprian drew a distinction between the degrees of guilt.[2] The most heinous offence was that of the *sacrificati*, of those who had eaten of the flesh of the sacrifice proffered to them by the hand of the public executioner.[3] To the second class belonged the *thurificati* who had dropped a grain or two of incense upon the fire that burned before the idol; to the third the *libellatici*, who had obtained from the magistrate a certificate of paganism.[4] Cyprian ordered

[1] *Test.* iii. 28.

[2] Dionysius also made a similar distinction at Alexandria (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 46. 1), though we do not know whether his classification was the same as Cyprian's.

[3] See the *Acta Pionii*.

[4] See last chapter. The reader will observe that *libellus* means merely a certificate, and denotes equally a certificate of paganism signed by the judge, or a certificate of absolution signed by a confessor.

that all these offenders alike must wait till the persecution was at an end, when their cases would be examined in a full assembly of the *stantes* (those who had not in any way denied the truth) and decided on their merits. He added the harsh admonition that, if any desired immediate absolution for his sin, he could obtain it by martyrdom.[1] But many thought these terms too severe. Cyprian's letters to Carthage were not answered; he took alarm and abated his rigour. Those who had received an indulgence from the martyrs, if they fell sick, might be absolved by a presbyter, or if the danger was imminent even by a deacon.[2] A little later, influenced by a letter from the Roman clergy, he extended this relaxation to all who were sick and penitent.[3] Some blamed him for these concessions,[4] some applauded. It is evident how greatly the difficulty of the whole matter was aggravated by the fact that at this critical juncture the bishop was not in personal touch with his flock.

In 251, the persecution having been suspended owing to the catastrophe of the Gothic War, Cyprian judged it safe to return to Carthage, after an absence of fourteen months, and called together the expected council. He found his Church in a state of distraction. All over the world Christendom was like a broken army, and the task of restoring discipline and cohesion, in the midst of internal dissensions, with fresh battles impending, was one of supreme difficulty. Nowhere were the dangers so great as at Rome and Carthage. In both places puritanism was strong, and there were many who were ready to break up the unity of the Church rather than admit that the apostate could be forgiven. At Rome Cornelius was elected Pope in March, 251; the see had lain vacant since the martyrdom of Fabian on January 20, 250; and immediately the learned and austere Novatian, who had served as correspondent and acting head of the Roman clergy during the interregnum, was created Antipope by a strong party

[1] *Ep.* 55. 4 'qui differri non potest potest coronari'.
[2] *Ep.* 18. [3] *Ep.* 20; for other relaxations see *Epp.* 24, 25.
[4] *Ep.* 55.

of malcontents. At Carthage there were many puritans, but there was also a powerful section who had opposed the election of Cyprian, steadily refused to acknowledge him as bishop, and threw in his way all the difficulties they could. One conspicuous figure in this band was Felicissimus, a deacon, who had gone so far as to readmit *lapsi* on his own authority in defiance of Cyprian's directions, and even to excommunicate those who had accepted the alms sent by Cyprian for the relief of such as had lost their all in the persecution. Another was one Novatus, who was a puritan, and threw in his lot with the Roman Novatian.

Thus it happened that three questions came for adjudication before the Carthaginian synod of 251. It was necessary to decide which of the rival Popes should be acknowledged. This was easily settled as soon as full information was received, yet not without a brief period of suspense, which Cornelius resented. Again the synod appears to have considered and ratified the sentence of excommunication pronounced by Cyprian against Felicissimus and his adherents.[1] Finally it was agreed that the *lapsi* should all be readmitted—the *libellatici* after a term of penance longer or shorter according to the circumstances of their offence, the *thurificati* and *sacrificati* in the hour of death or in case of sickness which appeared to threaten death. Those of the clergy who had fallen away were to be restored with the rest, but only to lay communion. But in the following year, when there was grave reason to fear that the persecution would be renewed by Gallus, a second council (held on May 15, 252) decided that peace should be given to all the fallen without delay. In announcing this new decision to Cornelius,[2] Cyprian expressly abandons his former harsh view that those who chafed at delay could obtain peace and pardon at once by embracing the second baptism of blood. How, he now asks, can any one fight the Church's battle unless the Church arms him for the

[1] *Epp.* 41, 42, 43. Cyprian does not expressly say that Felicissimus was condemned by this council, but the fact appears to be implied in his letter to Cornelius, *Ep.* 45. 4.

[2] *Ep.* 57. 1, 2.

battle, or unless he is animated by the courage which is given by the reception of the Eucharist? At last he had attained a clear and tenable position. He attributes his change of policy partly to the pressure of circumstances, but still more to numerous and manifest visions.

Thus finally it became evident that his former views had been far too severe. But in the course of the dispute he had given deep offence to two parties, to that of Felicissimus by his rigour, to that of Novatus by his clemency. Both parties proceeded to create rival bishops of their own. The nominee of Felicissimus was one Fortunatus. That of Novatus was one Maximus, a Roman presbyter. The party of the former rested upon no discernible principle and fell to pieces almost at once; Novatianism endured for some centuries.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in this severe disciplinary crisis Cyprian showed himself vacillating, injudicious, and harsh. That he was sadly deficient in judicial calmness and equability is the impression derived also from the treatise *De Unitate*. It appears to have been written shortly before the council of 251, and is in the main a fierce rhetorical tirade against the sin of schism, which could only embitter those whom it so unsparingly denounced. There was much that was amiable in Cyprian; he made devoted friends, but it may be doubted whether he ever converted an opponent.

In 252 the Oriental plague reached Africa from Egypt. It was a disaster of the first magnitude and may well be compared to the Black Death of the fifteenth century.[1] There must have been in the heathen world still, as there were in the time of Thucydides, some who were willing to risk their lives for the good of their perishing fellows, but there was no organization to cope with the manifold horrors of a time of pestilence. The Emperor Gallus and his son Volusianus indeed exerted themselves to provide decent

[1] See for this frightful pestilence Eutropius, ix. 5; *Historia Augusta*, Gallieni Duo, 5; Zosimus, i. 26; Dionysius in Eus. vii. 22; Gregory Nyssen's *Vita Gregorii Thaum.* 12; Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, 9; Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum de Mortalitate*; Benson, *Cyprian*, 240 sqq.; Schiller, i, p. 809.

sepulture for the immense numbers who died in Rome,[1] but beyond this we read of no definite attempts to grapple with the evil. Cyprian rose to the emergency, reminded his people of the example of Christ, and exhorted them not to disgrace their pedigree.[2] The people answered his appeal; the wealthy gave freely, while the poor offered their personal services and went forth among their suffering fellow townsmen to tend and succour all alike, whether Christians or pagans. This noble work appears to have been carried on for some years. Cyprian's part in it was cut short by his banishment in 257. There had been outcries in the streets demanding that he should be cast to the lions. 'Such,' says his biographer, 'was the reward of him who had laboured so hard to save the eyes of the living from beholding the horrors of hell.'

Cyprian insists with great force and, as we know from his personal history, with perfect sincerity upon the duty of almsgiving. His treatise *De Opere et Eleemosyna* is one of the most favourable specimens of his eloquence. He compares Christian liberality to the heathen *munus*.[3] The *munera* were civic obligations imposed by strong custom or law upon all men, according to their degree, in addition to the taxes.[4] They included the exhibition of games and spectacles, the building and maintenance of roads, aqueducts, theatres, baths, and public guest-houses, with many duties involving both personal labour and expense for the common behoof, and they formed a remarkable feature in ancient municipal life. Many people spent vast sums in these ways, especially during the first three centuries of the empire. It was a common and serious complaint against Christians that they declined these exhibitions of public spirit and left others to pay for the beautification of the town, the amusement of the citizens, and even the relief of the poor, for one great branch of the *munera* consisted in the provision of public banquets. What Cyprian means, then, is that the Christian should wipe

[1] Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 30.

[2] 'Respondere nos decet natalibus nostris,' Pontius, 9.

[3] Chap. 21. [4] See on them *Digest*, 50. 4.

away this reproach upon his profession, and show that, when he joined the Church, he did not propose to save his money. No one can doubt that the call was answered with amazing liberality, without any admixture of worldly motives.

Further, as soon as the organization of the Church became firmly established casual or impulsive charity was discouraged, though not forbidden. All gifts were to be given to the bishop, and administered by him through his experienced officers. Thus before Cyprian's time charity had assumed large well-considered social forms rising above personal, parochial, in some cases even ecclesiastical, aims. We have just noticed one instance in the case of Cyprian's plague work. Another will be found in the relief sent from Carthage to the Numidian bishops for the redemption of the Christian captives taken by the Berber tribes in the great raids of 252. A sum of about £1,000 was forwarded, with the promise of more, if more should be needed, and a request that the donors, whose names were given, should be commemorated at the Eucharist and in private prayers.[1] Prisoners of war had often been ransomed by the Roman Senate,[2] but not helpless women or unwarlike peasants.[3]

The preaching and practice of the primitive Christians on the subject of charity form one of the most beautiful features in their morality, and was no doubt a great source of strength to the Church. The only criticism that we can pass upon Cyprian here is that in common with Tertullian he speaks too much of 'earning the favour of God', of 'making satisfaction to God' by charity.[4] There is some foundation for this mode of expression even in the New Testament (e. g. Acts x. 4), but the two African lawyers gave a strong impulse to that legal conception of righteousness which was already prevalent, and came gradually to form so marked a feature in Western theology. In the nice balance between motive and deed they attributed too

[1] *Ep.* 62. 4, 5. [2] See Cic. *De Off.* ii. 18. 63, quoted by Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 238.

[3] On this organized charity of the early Church see Harnack, *Mission*, p. 112.

[4] 'Promereri Deum; satisfacere Deo.'

much weight to the latter, and they did not entirely succeed in barring the door against the heathen notion of bribing God by sacrifice.

We have noticed above Cyprian's view of the independence of bishops. To the Bishop of Rome he ascribed a high precedence of respect and dignity, but not a shred of jurisdiction over himself or any other bishop. There are several incidents which will illustrate his position.

The election of Cornelius was disputed by a party of malcontents who consecrated their own champion Novatian as Antipope. Cyprian felt it necessary to inquire into the matter, and directed that Cornelius should not be recognized by the clergy of his diocese until satisfactory evidence of the validity of the election was forthcoming, notwithstanding that Cornelius had written with his own hand to announce his elevation in the usual way. Cornelius was rather nettled by this attitude of neutrality, and retorted by demanding full information about Felicissimus, who had told him that Cyprian himself was no true bishop. Cyprian sets forth his case,[1] but there is no question of jurisdiction on the one side or on the other. The letters are such as might have been written in a similar case by any bishop to any other. Nor did the matter disturb the amicable relations between the two prelates.

But in the time of Stephanus, who succeeded Lucius, the next Pope after Cornelius, in 254, new and graver difficulties arose. One sprang out of the case of Basilides and Martialis, two Spanish bishops, the former of Leon, the latter of Merida. Both had lapsed in the persecution so far as to accept *libelli*, or certificates of paganism, from the Roman officials. Martialis had even been a member of a pagan *collegium*, and had buried his own sons in a pagan cemetery with pagan rites. Both had been deposed by their own people, and at Leon a new bishop, Sabinus, had been consecrated in place of Basilides. Both went to Rome, and obtained from Stephanus an order that they should be reinstated in their respective sees. Upon this four Spanish Churches, Leon, Astorga, Merida, and Saragossa, laid their

[1] *Ep.* 59.

case before Cyprian and asked for his advice. Cyprian, writing as the spokesman of an African council, replies that in such a case the Churches affected are the proper judges; it is their duty to elect their bishop, and, if he should prove unworthy of his office, to depose him, and that all the bishops in Christendom, including 'our colleague Cornelius', had decided that, though lapsed clergy could be admitted to penance, they must be deprived of their office and reduced to the position of laymen. Stephanus is treated with respect; he was ignorant of the facts, says Cyprian,[1] and had been imposed upon by the two offenders. But the Roman Pope's order or advice is treated as of no avail, and it is even implied that he had no power to decide in such a matter at all.[2]

In this Spanish case we find Cyprian appealing to a general consensus of the episcopal body, that lapsed clergy could be readmitted only to lay communion, and maintaining that the Pope himself was bound by this agreement; further, that the Pope himself could not annul the judgement of a local Church which was in conformity with that agreement. The other difficulty arose in Gaul out of Novatianism.

Marcianus, Bishop of Arles, the chief see in the ancient province, held the opinion of the excommunicated Novatian. He refused absolution to the lapsed and, according to Cyprian, he had even gone so far as to break off communion with the Catholic party. Faustinus, at Lyons, who may have been regarded as the primate of all the Gauls, convoked a synod, at which a resolution was passed that Marcianus should be excommunicated and deposed. The sentence could not be executed, probably because the Church of Arles agreed with its bishop; and therefore Faustinus addressed repeated letters to Stephanus and to Cyprian demanding their support. Stephanus would take no action. We do not know why. He was a resolute and even a passionate man, yet in all his differences with Cyprian he appears to have taken the more liberal and merciful view.

[1] Perhaps he means the special facts about Martialis and his *collegium*.

[2] *Ep.* 67.

Certainly he refused, in the Gallic as in the Spanish case, to be bound by the opinions of other bishops. He claimed to be supreme judge, and not a mere delegate. Cyprian, on the other hand, insisted that Novatian himself having been condemned, his opinion also had been anathematized, and that any bishop who held it ought at once to be deposed. Accordingly he wrote to Stephen in rather imperious terms, again alleging the consensus of the episcopate,[1] calling upon Stephen to execute the judgement of his colleagues, and in their name to order the Church of Arles to depose Marcianus and elect another in his room.

It is difficult to acquit Cyprian here of inconsistency. The Church of Arles was apparently content with its bishop. Cyprian himself held that puritanism was an open question, unless the puritan deliberately cut himself off from the Church on this account.[2] The sin was not puritanism, but schism. Now it is doubtful whether Marcian had actually set up a Church of his own, for otherwise Stephen must have taken action of some kind.

Again, why does Cyprian urge upon Stephen that it is his duty to execute the sentence of the bishops? The reason was that his theory of episcopacy required much more toleration than Cyprian possessed. His zeal for uniformity was far stronger than his love for freedom. Marcian must be coerced, and in this case at least Stephen must be invested with something very like monarchical authority. It is not without reason that the Arlesian dispute has been quoted by the advocates of Roman supremacy, and Cyprian helped to forge a weapon which was almost instantly turned against himself in the rebaptismal controversy.

The sacrament of baptism was regarded as consisting of two parts—the actual baptism which conveyed remission of sins, and confirmation, or laying on of hands, which conveyed the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, supposing that a person who, having been baptized by one who did not belong to the Catholic Church, yet in the proper form, desired afterwards to be admitted into the Catholic Church,

[1] 'Collegium nostrum,' *Ep.* 68. 2. [2] *Ep.* 55.

ought he to receive confirmation alone, or ought he also to be brought to the font? In other words, was heretical or schismatical baptism to be treated as wholly invalid, or only as imperfect?

The question had assumed an acute form about the end of the second century, when there appear to have been many cases of such conversions. It had been differently answered in different places.

In Africa Tertullian had maintained the invalidity of separatist baptism.[1] Some twenty years later a council of the African Church under Agrippinus[2] had affirmed the same principle.

In Rome a party maintained the same view in the time of Callistus. They were regarded by Hippolytus[3] as quite in the wrong.

In the East the view of Tertullian seems to have been very prevalent. Two Phrygian synods at Iconium and at Synnada had affirmed it, and Firmilian of Cappadocia, a contemporary and correspondent of Cyprian, strongly upholds this decision.[4] Antioch and Northern Syria appear to have followed the same practice.[5] On the other hand, Palestine and Egypt did not.

A very important authority on the point is Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote several letters on the subject.[6] This learned, generous, and conservative prelate did not himself baptize converts from heresy or schism, but regarded the whole question as a matter of discipline which each bishop must decide for himself. In fact, whichever rule was established in any diocese, there appear to have been dissidents.

Cyprian held three councils on this subject, one in 255, another before Easter, 256, and the last on September 1, 256. Of this last we have a very interesting account in a docu-

[1] In *De Baptismo*, 15, and still more explicitly in the lost Greek draft of the *De Baptismo*. Both these belong to Tertullian's Catholic days; see Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 268.

[2] The date of this council is unknown. It seems to have been held some time between 213 and 220.

[3] *Phil.* ix. 12 ad fin.

[4] Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.

[5] Duchesne, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Église*, vol. i, p. 423.

[6] In Eus. *H. E.* vii. 3 sqq.

ment which records the very words used by the eighty-seven bishops of Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania who were then present.[1] Here Cyprian, while declaring that in his opinion the baptism of heretics was absolutely null and void, declares also that no bishop need feel himself bound by the decision of his brethren, and that none is to try to force his own opinion upon another. 'For none of us makes himself bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical measures compels his colleagues to the necessity of obeying.'

In these words we have Cyprian's defiance of Stephen. After the second of the three councils Cyprian had sent a deputation to Rome. Stephen refused to admit them to his presence, forbade the Roman brethren to show them any hospitality, and wrote a letter to his adherents in Africa in which he denounced Cyprian as 'a false Christ, a false apostle, and a dishonest worker'.[2] A little before this he had excommunicated, or threatened to excommunicate, the bishops of Asia Minor.[3] Thus Stephen had repeated the error of Victor towards the Quartodecimans, and had done this on the ground that, as successor of St. Peter and of St. Paul, he was the inheritor of the teaching of those two great Apostles. In fact, he was claiming universal jurisdiction as vicar of the Apostles.

His claim was rejected without argument by Africa and the East. The question of rebaptism, as it was called,[4] remained open in the West till the Council of Arles, when it was ordered that converted heretics should not be rebaptized unless their belief in the Trinity was unsound;[5] if it was sound, they were only to receive imposition of hands. The same rule was laid down at Nicaea.[6] Down to this date neither side had won a complete victory. Stephen, who would not have rebaptized a Marcionite,[7] and Cyprian,

[1] The *Sententiae Episcoporum*; see Hartel, *Opp. Cypr.* Part i, p. 435.

[2] Firmilian's letter in Cyprian's *Ep.* 75. 25.

[3] Firmilian says the Oriental bishops. Ib. Dionysius, in Eus. *H. E.* vii. 5, confirms the statement as to those of Cilicia, Galatia, and the neighbouring provinces.

[4] Cyprian and his bishops objected to the phrase rebaptism, maintaining as they did that heretics had never been baptized at all.

[5] Canon 8. [6] Canon 19. [7] Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.

who would have rebaptized a Novatianist, were both corrected. Rebaptism was prohibited in the case of schismatics, but affirmed in the case of heretics. What appears to have been the rule of Stephen, that when the form was correct the baptism was valid,[1] and what certainly was the rule of Cyprian, that one who was himself outside of the Church could not convey that Spirit who makes the Church, were both treated as only partially accurate; the former on the ground that heretics used the names of the Trinity in a sense that was not Catholic, the latter on the ground that one who was merely a schismatic could not be wholly excluded from the Kingdom of the Spirit.

Later on, in 375, the question was treated by St. Basil in his *First and Second Canonical Epistles to Amphilochius.*[2] St. Basil himself rebaptized heretics and schismatics alike, just as St. Cyprian had done, but at the same time acknowledges that the Romans and some Orientals followed a different rule.

The rule of the Eastern Church is still that of St. Basil and St. Cyprian. The rule of the Roman Church is expressed in the decrees of the Council of Trent: 'If any one affirms that baptism, even though given by heretics in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with the intention of doing what the Church does, is not true baptism, let

[1] There is some doubt what form of words Stephen accepted as sufficient. His letter does not survive, but its general tenor and to some extent its language may be gathered from Cyprian, *Epp.* 73, 74, 75 (the last is Firmilian's). He said that even Marcionites ought not to be rebaptized, because they had already been baptized 'in the name of Jesus Christ', and it has been supposed that he means in that name alone. The same interpretation has been put upon the *De Rebaptismate*, a contemporary treatise in which the Roman view is maintained. The second title of this treatise is 'Non debere denuo baptizari qui semel in nomine Domini Iesu Christi sint baptizati'. But (c. 7) the author says that the use of the Trinitarian formula is commanded, and ought to be and is used in the Church. Unfortunately we do not know what form of words was in use among the Marcionites. But I see no sufficient reason for supposing that it was not Trinitarian. The date of the *De Rebaptismate* is not absolutely certain. See Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 393 sqq.; Bardenhewer, ii. 448; Routh, v. 283 sqq.; Neander, i. 466 (Bohn's trans.); Benson, 390 sqq. The author is not clear either in thought or in expression, and his Latin is markedly vulgar; more so than we should expect in the middle of the third century.

[2] *Epp.* 188, 199, ed. Bened.

him be anathema.'[1] Here we seem to find the rule of Pope Stephen. But the reference to 'intention' covers all the difference between Stephen and Cyprian. Cyprian would have said that it was certainly not the intention of a Novatianist or of a Marcionite to make the baptized a member of the Catholic Church.

Does the peace of God then depend on mere correctness of form, or does the virtue of the sacrament depend upon the intention of the baptizer? To some extent the latter must be true, but to what extent? These are the questions which must be precisely answered before we praise or blame Cyprian for his views upon baptism.

A year after Cyprian's last council on the baptismal dispute, in 257, the persecution was renewed by the issue of Valerian's first edict. Cyprian was immediately summoned before Aspasius Paternus, the proconsul, and sent into banishment to Curubis,[2] a lonely but agreeable little seaside town, about fifty miles distant from Carthage. Here he remained for three years, in free custody, attended by his own suite, receiving numerous visitors, aided and comforted by the affection of the local Church, and calmly expecting the martyrdom of which he was assured by a vision. From Curubis he corresponded with a large group of Numidian martyrs and confessors, clergy and laity, men, women, and children, who were arrested about the same time as himself. Cyprian managed to send these sufferers some not inconsiderable relief in money.[3] The letters on both sides are marked by an exalted tone of affection, courage, and enthusiasm. We read of no more denials. In August, 260, the new proconsul Galerius Maximus directed Cyprian to return to his *horti* at Carthage, and shortly afterwards summoned him to come to Utica and there be tried. But Cyprian was determined to suffer in the midst of his own people, and managed to evade the summons until the proconsul returned to Carthage.[4] On September 13 two officers came to fetch him, but

[1] Sessio vii, *De Baptismo*, Canon 4.

[2] He was sentenced to 'deportation' on August 30, 257. See *Acta Proconsularia*, 2.

[3] *Epp.* 76–99.

[4] *Ep.* 81.

on that day Galerius, who was himself a dying man, was too ill to hear the case, and Cyprian was carried for the night to the house of one of the chief centurions, a high official, accompanied by many friends. A great crowd of Christians and brethren gathered about the doors and there remained throughout the night. Cyprian sent out a direction that the girls, who were there among the others, should be carefully protected against harm. This was his last act of episcopal authority.

On September 14 he was brought before Galerius. The usual questions were briefly asked and briefly answered, and the proconsul at once read out the sentence, though he was so weak that he could barely frame the words.[1] When Cyprian heard his doom he answered *Deo gratias*, a phrase which appears to have been inculcated upon all Christians as proper for use at this dread moment.

The sentence had been pronounced in a building known as the House of Sextus, and in a hall known as the *Atrium Sauciolum*. From thence Cyprian was led into the *Ager Sexti*, the park round the house. The spot lay in a valley commanded on either side by sloping groves. Many of the accompanying throng climbed the trees, the better to see the end. Cyprian made no speech, but silently divested himself of his outer garments, a *lacerna birrus* and a dalmatic, the ordinary apparel of a Roman gentleman, and then knelt down for a few moments in prayer. When the *spiculator*, or sub-officer, who was to dispatch him arrived, he directed his friends to give the man a fee of 25 aurei, or about £15 of our money. Then he pressed to his eyes the handkerchief with which he was to be blindfolded, while two of his attendant clergy tied the knot behind his head. The blow fell, and the blood of Cyprian was soaked up by linen cloths which his people had cast down before him for this purpose.

The corpse was left lying where it fell till the setting of the sun, when it was delivered up to the Christians, and by them carried in triumphal procession by torchlight

[1] He died a few days afterwards.

into the cemetery of Macrobius Candidianus, a former procurator.

It is worth while to give these details of the martyrdom as they have been handed down to us by eyewitnesses. They testify to the high respect felt for Cyprian not only by his own Church, but by the leaders of heathen society in Carthage. They show also the dignity which by this time attached to the position of bishop even in the eyes of the secular authorities. Cyprian's death was attended by the same kind of ceremonial which used to be observed in England at the execution of a nobleman upon Tower Hill.

The power of Cyprian in the Western Church was immense from the day of his death, or rather, to use the Christian phrase, from his 'birthday'. In the *Acta* of Marianus and Jacobus, and in those of Montanus and Lucius, we see how his example and teaching inflamed the zeal and quelled the discord of the African Church. Towards the end of the fourth century Prudentius assures us that Cyprian was adored all over the West, even in Britain, but especially in Spain.[1] He even adds to the authentic story the terrible myth of the *Massa Candida*, which tells of a body of three hundred Christians who, rather than offer sacrifice, threw themselves headlong into a pit of slaking lime.

In the East Cyprian was highly respected but little known. By the middle of the third century Latin was hardly understood in the East or Greek in the West, and the difference of language was tending irresistibly to produce division. Cyprian was barely mentioned by Eusebius, and that without any reference to his death. Gregory Nazianzen, in one of his impassioned orations, treats him as the first and greatest of all martyrs, and tells us that he was held in honour throughout the Christian world; but he gives us to understand that not all Easterns felt as warmly as himself towards the great Latin.[2] Nor did he think it necessary to confine himself to ascertained facts. He makes Cyprian a member of the Roman Senate, a statement which cannot be corroborated, and tells at length the story of the

[1] *περὶ στεφάνων*, 13.

[2] *Oratio* xxiv.

virgin Justina, which belongs to another Cyprian, a magician of Antioch. Even the Western Prudentius appears to confound the namesakes. But this is only one out of many proofs how little authority can be attributed in matters of hagiography to writers of the end of the fourth century, whether they wrote in Greek or in Latin.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RATIONALISTIC UNITARIANS

From the first the Church worshipped three Divine Persons. Towards the end of the second century we find them, in Theophilus, bound together under one new name, that of Trinity or Triad. The First and Second Persons are called God; to the Third this supreme title is not yet expressly applied except by the Montanists.

As yet the Christian body had not distinctly asked itself how this traditional belief differed from polytheism, but, if challenged upon the point, it always maintained that it worshipped one God, and one God only. They were all Monarchians, but they held also an economy, a celestial mystery, by virtue of which the sovereign power, in itself one, entire, and indivisible, was yet shared by three distinct persons.

But what was the precise nature of this economy? The Gnostics had endeavoured to explain it in their own peculiar fashion. But there were other theories, known to at any rate some of the Gnostics, which emerge distinctly towards the end of the second century. As yet they concern chiefly the relation of the Father and the Son.

The first name[1] that calls for notice is that of Theodotus

[1] I have not spoken in the text of the Alogi, a sect which had no existence in fact. Epiphanius devotes to them a chapter (*Haer.* 51), and says that he himself invented the name, that they rejected all the writings of St. John (Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse), attributing them all to Cerinthus, but that in other points they agreed with the Catholic Church. He refers to certain of their writings. Among his authorities was no doubt Hippolytus; cp. *Haer.* 51. 34, with *Capita adversus Gaium*, iv, in the Berlin ed. of Hippolytus, ii, p. 243. Gaius, an orthodox Roman, was a strong opponent of Montanism, and went so far in his dislike of the New Prophecy as to maintain that the visions of the Apocalypse were unscriptural and unhistorical, and that the book was written by Cerinthus (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 28. 2–5). In the surviving fragments of the Commentary of Hippolytus on St. John's Gospel there is

of Byzantium, commonly called the leather-merchant, from the occupation which he had pursued in his earlier days. He had, however, contrived to obtain some not inconsiderable degree of education, and was so far known in his native town that he was denounced as a prominent Christian, brought before the governor,[1] and denied the faith. After this he found it desirable to change his place of abode, and went to Rome. The brethren there had heard of his lapse, and demanded an explanation. He replied, 'I denied not God but man,' asserting that Christ was born of human seed. So at least Epiphanius affirms;[2] but it should be observed that on this last important point he is not in agreement with the much better informed Hippolytus.

The latter tells us[3] that Theodotus, agreeing with Cerinthus and Ebion, though in other respects not a Gnostic, taught that Jesus was a mere man. Yet He was 'born of the Virgin according to the will of the Father', and was so pious, that at His baptism in Jordan Christ was sent down upon Him in the form of a dove. After this Jesus became Christ, and was able to work miracles. But He was never God. Some of the Theodotians, however, appear to have maintained that Jesus became God after the Baptism, or after the Resurrection.[4] This teaching so closely resembles that of the *Clementine Homilies* that Hippolytus can hardly be mistaken in regarding it as Ebionite. The approximate date is given by the unnamed author quoted by Eusebius,[5] who tells us that Theodotus, the leather-merchant, was excommunicated by Pope Victor.

no mention of Gaius; but we know from Irenaeus, iii. 11. 9, that the Gospel was rejected, not only by Marcion, but by others who objected to its teaching about the Paraclete and the Prophetic Spirit. These must have been bigoted anti-Montanists, and Gaius may have been one of them, and attributed the Gospel as well as the Apocalypse to Cerinthus, though we do not know that he actually did this. If he did, his judgement was not equal to his reputed learning.

[1] Was this Capella? [2] *Haer.* 54. [3] *Phil.* vii. 35; x. 23.

[4] *Phil.* vii. 35. Theodotus was an absolute Unitarian. But some of his adherents held that Jesus, though 'a mere man', was by reason of His holiness made God in a secondary sense 'by adoption', as good men are, but in a much higher degree. Hence the modern name *Adoptionists*.

[5] *H. E.* v. 28. 9. He was probably Hippolytus.

Shortly afterwards another Theodotus, a banker,[1] taught a similar doctrine at Rome, adding to it that Christ was only the image of Melchisedec, who was the greatest of the powers of God. This peculiar tenet would seem to be a kind of Gnostical perversion of the well-known passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews. If not derived from the Ebionites, it is certainly akin to their speculations.

In the time of Zephyrinus, the banker Theodotus found himself, or thought himself, so strong that, with the support of a disciple named Asclepiodotus, he undertook to establish a Church. Money was not wanting, and the two were able to persuade one Natalius, by the promise of a good salary, to officiate as their bishop. Natalius was admonished of his sin by repeated visions, and when he neglected these warnings was scourged by the holy angels all night long, to the great detriment of his person. As soon as day broke he clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, and hastened to throw himself at the feet of Zephyrinus. A strange tale, characteristic of the age.[2]

A somewhat later teacher of the same school was Artemon or Artemas.[3]

We gather from the story of Natalius that these Adoptionists, if we may so call them, were laymen. They were educated men building, like the Arians after them, upon the positive philosophy. They studied Euclid, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and above all Galen, and argued in syllogisms like the mediaeval Schoolmen. They were charged with correcting or falsifying Scripture, and did not agree with one another in all their conclusions. But they all agreed on one point—in denying the divinity of Christ—and asserted that in doing so they were following the authority of the Apostles, and of the whole line of the Popes from Peter to Victor. The unnamed author quoted by Eusebius replies by appealing to Scripture, to the early Fathers, and to the psalms and hymns of the Church, and further asserts that the first who taught their doctrine was Theodotus the

[1] *Phil.* vii. 36. [2] Eus. *H. E.* v. 28.

[3] Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 202, judges that he taught between 225 and 230.

leather-seller, who had been driven out of the Church by Victor, the predecessor of Zephyrinus.[1]

This we may call the rationalistic explanation of the Economy. It does not appear to have produced much impression. In the West it left few traces or none. In the East some have thought that it helped to shape the ideas of Paul of Samosata and of Beryllus of Bostra, but this is highly doubtful.

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 28.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SPIRITUAL UNITARIANS

There was another method of explaining the Economy, which taught a Trinity of Names but not of Persons. On this view, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one and the same God, revealing Himself to His Church at various times under different manifestations and titles and modes.[1]

Traces of this opinion are to be found in the second century in the Gnostical *Acts of John* and in passages of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.* In the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries it was energetically preached by Praxeas an Asiatic, Sabellius an African, Noetus of Smyrna, and his disciples Epigonus and Cleomenes.

Praxeas, a determined enemy of Montanism, had invaded Africa, and obtained some success there among the less instructed brethren, but was dislodged probably by Tertullian, who afterwards wrote a treatise against him.[2] Thence he made his way to Rome, where he persuaded the then Pope, Eleutherus or Victor, to denounce Montanism. 'Thus,' says Tertullian, 'he accomplished at Rome two works of the devil; he drove out prophecy and introduced a heresy, he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father.'

The last charge is not a mere theological inference thrust upon the Sabellians by their adversaries. Hippolytus had read a book of theirs in which it was expressly maintained, that as the Bible speaks of One God, and as St. Paul tells us[3] that Christ is God, it follows with certainty that the

[1] Hence the Sabellians have been, in modern times, called Modalists.

[2] *Adv. Praxean*, 1: the date of this work according to Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 286, is 213–18.

[3] Rom. ix. 5.

Two are One, and that the Father suffered upon the Cross for our redemption.[1] On this account the Sabellians are commonly nicknamed Patripassians.

The other teachers named all worked in Rome, with the possible exception of Noetus. The sect which they founded is called Noetian or Sabellian, but the latter appellation is more usually employed.

This Sabellian doctrine produced a great commotion in the capital. Hippolytus charges Pope Zephyrinus with saying now one thing and now another out of pure ignorance. On the next Pope, Callistus, he empties all the vials of his wrath, accusing him of deluding his predecessor, and of deliberately playing fast and loose, until by this temporizing policy he had secured the Papacy for himself, when at last he turned round upon Sabellius and cast him out of the Church. All this fire and fury probably arose out of misunderstanding. Zephyrinus may have been illiterate, and little capable of judging by himself on any but simple questions, and Callistus was probably fitter for action than for abstract thought. It may well be that he held the same view as Tertullian, that Father and Son were One because they were of the same substance; it may well be also that he could not explain his view with delicacy or scholarly precision. Hippolytus, who speaks of the Trinity as One by reason of their perfect harmony, might very well be shocked by this mode of conception, as were the conservative opponents of St. Athanasius in later times. Hence he called Callistus a Sabellian, while Callistus retorted that Hippolytus himself was a Ditheist.

The Sabellians drew their opinions not from philosophy but from Scripture, and their antagonists relied upon the same authority. It was a question of exegesis. The Sabellians were greatly helped by the Logos doctrine which was so prevalent in the second century. Whether Logos means Reason or Word, the title might easily be so conceived as to represent nothing but a mode of operation of the One God, who thought and uttered His thought. What wrecked

[1] Hipp. *Contra Haer. Noeti*, 1.

Sabellianism was the phrase adopted in the Creed, 'Son of God,' a much deeper and obviously personal appellation, implying at once unity of Nature and distinction of Person. Further, by this great title Christianity is rescued from the nightmare region of metaphysics and set upon its true foundation, that of love—the love between Father and Son, and between God and mankind. And yet again this belief in the Sonship of Christ is the ultimate differentia between Christianity and Judaism.

CHAPTER XXXI

WESTERN ANTI-SABELLIAN THEOLOGY

The Fathers of the second century, who were all more or less Apologists, made great use of the Logos doctrine. It was found highly serviceable against Gentiles as showing that Christianity was in fact built upon reason, and against Gnostics also, whose systems they regarded, not without justice, as unreasonable.

The term Logos was introduced into theology by St. John. From what source the Apostle derived it is not clear, but probably he borrowed it not from Philo but from current Jewish speculation upon the Word or Words of God. The Apostle uses the phrase but sparingly in the preface to his Gospel and in one passage of the Apocalypse. The latter passage seems to be clearly a reminiscence of the Book of Wisdom,[1] and it is probably to the Haggada that we should look for the Johannine Word. St. John was not a bookish man, and it was hardly probable that he had read Philo.

But the term was familiar to Greek philosophers, not so much to Platonists, in whose system it never plays a divine rôle, as to the Stoics. These were still very powerful in the second century, and their Spermatic Logos was in brief the Spirit of God by which the whole world was informed, giving to all things law, life, and reason. Thus Cato says, in *Lucan*, 'Iupiter est quodcumque vides quocumque moveris'.[2] It was the Stoic Word that hovered before the minds of the early Fathers.

In the third century Christ is still commonly spoken of as the Logos.

Tertullian, the first writer who calls for notice, begins his

[1] Cp. Apocalypse xix. 11–15 with Wisdom xviii. 14–16.

[2] Lucan, ix. 580; cp. Virg. *Aen.* vi. 724–9. St. Paul's speech at Athens, Acts xvii, shows how easily the Stoic doctrine could be utilized by a Christian.

treatise against Praxeas, the Sabellian, by insisting that all genuine Christians believed at once in a Monarchy and in an Economy, in One God and yet in Three Divine Persons. The Latins, he says, glancing probably at the party of Hippolytus, prattle about the Monarchy, but not even Greeks choose to understand what is meant by Economy. Accordingly he proceeds to explain the sense of the latter word.[1] There is One God yet there are Three Persons. The Three Persons are One, because they are all of One, that is to say by unity of substance, yet the mystery of the Economy differentiates the Unity into a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three not in condition but in degree, not in substance but in form, not in power but in attributes; yet of one substance, one condition, one power, because there is One God, from whom these degrees, forms, attributes, are assigned in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Second and Third Persons are fully divine, are indeed each God, because they are of the same nature as the Father, who has given to them all that they are and all that He Himself is, but for this reason also they are subordinate to the Father, inasmuch as He is their fountain and source. The Persons, adds Tertullian, are susceptible of number but not of division; they are distinct but not separable; where One is All are.

Thus Tertullian answers the charge that he was a Ditheist, or even a Tritheist. Monarchy, he says, means nothing but absolute sovereignty. It does not imply that the sovereign has no son, or that he is debarred from administering his sovereignty by other persons very closely related to himself, whom he himself has provided as his officials. A year or two before Tertullian wrote these words the Roman Empire had in fact been governed by three Emperors, Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta, and this analogy—it would be a very close one—may have been floating in his mind at the time.

He proceeds to illustrate his meaning by figures. 'God put forth the Word, as the Paraclete teaches us, as the root puts forth the shrub, or the fount the stream, or the sun his

[1] *Adv. Prax.* 3 foll.

rays.'[1] All these similes were intended to convey the idea of derivation without separation. If they are too concrete, this is the natural defect of all similes in similar cases.[2] It may be noticed that the mystery of the Trinity had been actually seen by some Montanist prophet under these figures. Further Tertullian was a Stoic materialist, and believed that God Himself had in some sense a body. Hence, vehemently as he insists upon the Unity of the Three, he could not really explain it except by derivation and perfect moral and intellectual harmony.

Of Christ, Tertullian taught that He was both God and man. God clothed Himself with flesh, and was not transfigured in the flesh. Both substances remained intact, each 'working distinctly' in its own proper estate. Otherwise the Saviour would have been neither God nor man but a *tertium quid* differing from both. One passage has been much misunderstood in which Tertullian affirms that 'the Father is the whole substance, the Son the derivation and portion of the whole'.[3] Portion here means not fragment, but inheritor or recipient. Thus when we read[4] that Domitian was the 'portion of the cruelty of Nero', we are to understand that he inherited the ferocity of Nero. Always Tertullian appears to mean that the Son received the whole of the Divine Nature, but, by the very fact that He received it, is to that extent inferior.

Subordinationism, in the sense in which Tertullian expounded it, has never wholly vanished from the Church. 'I, or we, believe in One God, the Father Almighty,' may be called the typical form of the first article of the Creed down to the so-called Creed of Athanasius, the first document in which the One God is expressly declared to be not the Father but the Trinity. The Son was generally believed to be inferior to the Father, not in power or glory, but because He was Son, not unbegotten, not without a cause or principle of being.

[1] *Adv. Prax.* 8.

[2] Ignatius Loyola saw the Holy Trinity 'ex figura de tres teclas', in the figure of three keys of a musical instrument. Ranke's *History of the Popes*, i, p. 141, Bohn's trans.

[3] Ib. 9.

[4] *Apol.* 5.

Yet from Tertullian's mode of statement two questions might arise. If the Son was subordinate, might He not be in some respects besides that of Sonship less than His Father? This we shall find discussed by Origen as a point not directly affirmed in the *regula fidei*, and therefore open to reverent consideration, and asserted by Arius and his adherents. The answer was taken from Tertullian. Those who are of the same substance cannot be unequal in nature.

Again, was the Son strictly speaking coeternal with the Father? Here again Tertullian's philosophy laid him under difficulties. He had learned to distinguish the Word as Reason from the Word as Speech.[1] Again, like all philosophers, with the exception of the Platonists, he did not accurately distinguish between Eternity and Time. Eternity, in his case, simply means all time,[2] time without beginning and without end,[3] not that life of spirit to which time with its sequences does not belong at all. For good or for evil Tertullian is quite untouched by Platonic metaphysics. From his point of view the result is necessarily posterior to the cause. Hence he holds that the Word as Reason lay immanent in the Father's bosom, and was uttered or came forth for the purpose of creation, when He was projected to execute the 'God said'. Now, as Tertullian, like all Christian doctors of the time, was a Chiliast, it follows that he believed the Word to have had no personal existence, until about 5,000 years before the reign of Augustus. Further he seems to have held that the Economy would determine on the Day of Judgement, when Christ would restore His Kingdom to the Father,[4] re-enter into the divine bosom, and again become impersonal.[5] This was in substance the doctrine afterwards condemned in the case of

[1] Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, λ. προφορικός. Both were in use among Gnostics in the time of Irenaeus. Tertullian may have borrowed them from the Gnostics; he certainly borrowed προβολή from Valentinus, *Adv. Praxean*, 8. Hippolytus also uses them, *Phil.* x. 33. They had been imported into Christian theology by Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*, ii. 10; see Otto's note upon this passage. They were used also by Philo, but only of human reason. Whether Philo invented or borrowed the phrases I do not know.

[2] *Adv. Marc.* i. 8. [3] *Adv. Hermog.* 4. [4] See 1 Cor. xv. 28.

[5] *Adv. Praxean*, 4, 5, 6.

Marcellus of Ancyra, who was one of the protagonists of the Council of Nicaea.

Thus, it will be seen, Tertullian anticipates the *Homoousion* of Nicaea, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught by Gregory Nazianzen and affirmed by the Council of Constantinople, and the doctrine of the Two Natures as laid down by Leo the Great and the Council of Chalcedon. Further he added to the vocabulary of Western theology two words of the first importance, Substance and Person.

The theology of Hippolytus is in some points very similar to that of Tertullian. Like Tertullian he speaks of a Monarchy and of an Economy. By Monarchy he means the One Sovereign Power belonging to the One Father, by Economy the inscrutable act of the Divine Will by which this Divine Power is delegated to the other Two Persons, who with the Father constitute the Trinity.

One remarkable feature in the exposition of Hippolytus is the overwhelming emphasis which he lays upon the Divine Will. God made the world as He would, and when He would. We are not to inquire too closely into the generation of the Word. The Word is 'the economy and will of the Father'[1]; and, if we ask a reason, the only reply is that the Father chose to be glorified in this way and in no other. It is so written in Scripture. This mode of thought explains the puritanism of Hippolytus. It was the will of God that some sins should be sins unto death.

The Unity of the Trinity he explains as consisting in perfect harmony. Noetus had made use of the text 'I and My Father are One'. Hippolytus replies that 'are' denotes Two Persons, 'one' one power, and enforces his argument by another passage of St. John's Gospel[2]: 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One.' 'Are we all one body in essence, or is it by power and by the disposition of likemindedness that we become One? Even so the Son that was sent confessed that He was in the Father by power and disposition.'[3] In this sense the Son is inseparable from the Father.[4] Elsewhere Hippolytus says that the Word was God because He was the essence of

[1] *C. Noetum*, 14. [2] xvii. 23. [3] *C. Noetum*, 7. [4] *C. Noetum*, 18.

God.[1] But he does not develop this argument as Tertullian had done.

When He determined to make, God was alone, and nothing was contemporaneous with Him.[2] Yet, though One, He was also Many. He had His Reason and His Wisdom. These He sent forth to be His agents creating by His Word or Reason, giving beauty and order by His Wisdom, that is to say by the Holy Spirit. Thus Another came and stood by Him. 'When I say Another I do not speak of two Gods, but as it were light of light, or water from a fountain, or a ray from the sun.' When the fullness of time arrived according to the will of the Father the Word took flesh of the Virgin Mary by the agency of the Holy Spirit[3] and so became Son of God. But the Word had from the first been called Son, because it was foreseen that He would one day be born upon earth. His original title is Logos, because He is the intelligence of God; Son is the epithet which denotes the divine love for man.[4] Thus God was manifested coming forth into the world in a body, coming forth as perfect Man. The treatise against Noetus ends with a fine exposition of the perfect humanity of the Saviour.

Hippolytus was as pronounced a Trinitarian as Tertullian. 'We see the Word Incarnate,' he writes;[5] 'we understand the Father through Him; we believe in the Son; we adore the Holy Spirit.'[6] 'The Economy of harmony is concluded

[1] *Phil.* x. 33. [2] *C. Noetum*, 10; *Phil.* x. 32.
[3] *C. Noetum*, 4. [4] *C. Noetum*, 15. [5] *C. Noetum*, 12.
[6] Dräseke is of opinion that the *Contra Noetum* has been dogmatically corrected (*Zeitsch. für Wiss. Theol.*, 1903, pp. 58 sqq., 72 sqq.), but I can see no clear signs of this. There is nothing that cannot be illustrated from writings of the time. As to the Holy Spirit, the following passages may be noted from the fragments contained in the Berlin edition:—*in Daniel*, p. 29, the believer who has not kept the commandments is deprived of the Holy Spirit, and driven out of the Church; p. 134, the Holy Spirit strengthens Daniel and gives him the face of an angel; p. 198, the Holy Spirit does not deceive His servants the prophets; *in Cant.*, p. 366, the Apostles brought forgiveness through the Holy Spirit; p. 369, the Holy Spirit was seen by the author of the Song of Songs; p. 370, the power of the Holy Spirit is the 'shield' which we receive in Baptism; part ii, p. 54, from the *Comm. on Genesis*, 'Isaac portat imaginem Dei Patris, Rebecca spiritus sancti, Esau populi prioris et diaboli, Jacob ecclesiae sive Christi.'

in One God, for God is One, the Father commanding, the Son obeying, the Holy Spirit teaching. The Father above all, the Son through all, the Holy Spirit in all.'[1] If Hippolytus does not with Tertullian apply the name God to the Third Person, his reason is the same that moved Irenaeus, Justin, and the Fathers generally down to Gregory Nazianzen, that Scripture did not seem to them so to speak, at any rate not with explicit clearness.

He is as much of a Subordinationist as Tertullian, and marks the distinction of Persons with even greater force. Like Tertullian, he was charged with Ditheism. Possibly Callistus disliked the teaching of both; certainly he would dislike them both personally. But, if Callistus was a Homoousian and not a Subordinationist, he would dislike Hippolytus much more than Tertullian.

We pass on to Novatian, the puritan schismatic, the first Roman theologian who wrote in Latin. His book, the *De Regula Fidei*,[2] is a dissertation on the Three Persons of the Trinity.

God the Father and Lord Almighty, Maker of the World and all that is therein, is infinite, immeasurable, and all-containing, without beginning and without end. He has no title which can describe Him worthily. We call Him Light, Power, Majesty; these names express in some degree His attributes, but in no way His Nature, which is above all our words and thoughts. He alone is good and unchangeable, without body, parts, or passions.

After the Father we believe in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and God, Very God and Very Man; after the Son we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete or Spirit of Truth, whose operations are fully described in the language of Scripture.

Novatian then proceeds to attack the problem of Unity. Both those who say that Christ is mere man, the Theodotians, and those who say that He is identical with the Father, the Sabellians, are wrong. The Word-Son was always in the Father and, when the Father willed, was born or projected or came forth. Thus He is posterior to

[1] *C. Noet.* 14. [2] I have used the edition of J. Jackson, 1728.

the Father and less than the Father, because He has an origin while the Father has none. Certainly He is God, because He proceeds from the Father, but He does not take away from the Father the title of the One God. Had the Son borne the names and attributes of the Father in His own right, then indeed there would have been two Gods, because two uncaused causes. Novatian ends by saying that the Father is the one True and Eternal God, that the Father is God of all; the Son is God and Lord of all except the Father. Thus strongly does Novatian emphasize the ideas of Derivation and Subordination. The Father gives to the Son all that He Himself is, with one exception. He could not bestow upon the Son His own great attribute of causelessness.

Novatian introduces one thought which is apparently quite his own. The Divinity which the Father bestowed upon the Son passes back, or is reflected, from the Son to the Father in an 'alternating stream' like, we may say, the swift reciprocal vibrations of the electric light between the two carbon poles of an arc lamp. This, Novatian says, depends upon the 'communion of substance' between Father and Son.[1] Here again we have the Homoousion, and here we trace the way in which this new argument was beginning to affect the current of theology.

All these writers use quite freely phrases which, after the appearance of Arianism, were regarded as highly objectionable. They have no fixed term for the relation of the Son to the Father. The Second Person was begotten, came forth, was sent, was projected, began to be, was founded, even was made.[2] They speak quite unconcernedly of the Son as posterior even in time to the Father, and make His generation an act of the Father's Will. Later theology

[1] *Reciproco meatu* is the phrase. *Per substantiae communionem* occurs just before in the same chapter 31, and is quite needlessly doubted by Mr. Jackson.

[2] γεννᾶσθαι, γίνεσθαι, προελθεῖν, προβάλλεσθαι, κτίζεσθαι even ποιεῖσθαι: see for this last Hipp. *Phil.* x. 33 εἰ γὰρ θεόν σε ἠθέλησε, ἐδύνατο· ἔχεις τοῦ λόγου τὸ παράδειγμα. Tertullian has *condere* = κτίζειν (from Prov. viii. 22) and even *facere*, *Adv. Praxean*, 11 'probamus illum sibi filium fecisse sermonem suum'. Any father might be said *facere* or *creare* filium.

decided that all words that might be used to describe the ineffable mystery of the Sonship were unlawful, with the single exception of Generation, and that even this was to be accepted as an authorized metaphor, that Will in the human sense, as meaning an arbitrary and contingent faculty, is not predicable of God, and that time does not belong to the relations of the Eternal.

These three doctors—Tertullian, Hippolytus, Novatian—were the three great ante-Nicene puritans. All three exaggerate the Transcendence, the All-might, the Incomprehensibility of God. Hence the main thing of which we are sure is the Divine Will. Even Goodness we know only as the Will of God. This is the root of all puritanism in Calvin as in Pascal. The great merit of Athanasius was that he restored to theology the full meaning of the words Father and Son. The Alexandrines had paved the way for him. They had learned from Platonism that the Good is the highest of all ideas.

CHAPTER XXXII

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Meanwhile other doctors had struck out upon a different road, and were endeavouring to combine with the old Christian tradition ideas borrowed partly from Jewish speculation, but largely, perhaps mainly, from pagan thought. Here we come to the highly perplexing question of the genesis and development of the Neoplatonic Trinity.

The Neoplatonic Trinity first emerges in the forged Platonic Letters. The date of these documents is uncertain, and all that we can say with confidence is that they were known to and quoted by Justin Martyr and Athenagoras in the second century.[1] They may be as old as the first century before Christ.

From an historical point of view the doctrine appears to rest upon a combination of Plato and Aristotle, the God of the latter, who thinks only Himself, being superposed upon the fatherly creative God and the World Spirit of the *Timaeus*. But the Three Persons, or Hypostases, reflect also a psychological distinction between the oneness of man, his personality which is unknown and unknowable, his 'I' which he cannot in any way define, yet must always presuppose, because it is the hidden root of all his thoughts and acts; his Nous or Reason; and thirdly, his Soul or Life. These speculations were possibly not unknown to Philo, who, after God and the Logos, speaks of the world as a 'younger son' of God, or 'His only and beloved sensible son' begotten by Him.[2] They were carried forward and elaborated in the second century by numerous writers, including Numenius, Cronius, and Ammonius Saccas. Many of these men had some acquaintance with the Bible. Cer-

[1] Justin, *Apol.* 60; Athenag. *Leg.* 23; see Otto's notes on both passages.
[2] Siegfried, *Philo*, p. 235.

tainly Numenius had, and Ammonius is even said to have been a renegade Christian; whether their Trinity was in any degree suggested by the New Testament is doubtful, though not impossible. They supplied the Christian teacher with what he greatly needed, a knowledge of metaphysics; in particular they taught him what they meant by Spirit and by Eternity. Thus they showed him a way in which Three Eternal Spirits might be One, yet only by stripping the First Hypostasis of all, or nearly all, that Christian tradition meant by the name Father. At many points we can trace the harmful results of their peculiar mode of thought upon Clement. Origen was much more independent and much more ecclesiastical.

The Church of Alexandria, founded according to a doubtful tradition by the Evangelist St. Mark,[1] whose tomb was shown in the great church of Baucalis by the harbour, remained almost without a history until the end of the second century. It is mentioned by Hadrian in his letter to Servianus; after this we hear of it no more until the persecution of Severus. Julius Africanus gave, in his chronicle published in 221, a list of bishops extending from about 61,[2] but the first bishop that is more than a name is Demetrius, who was elected about 189 and sat for forty-three years.

Of the political position of Egypt something has already been said.[3] Here we need only notice or repeat that Alexandria was the great emporium through which merchandise and ideas passed from the far East into the West, and that the population was sharply divided between a Greek aristocracy, a subject body of native Egyptians, and a strong colony of Jews. In the field of religion the gods of Hellas,

[1] Eusebius, ii. 16, mentions it but with some doubt. The author of the *Clementine Homilies*, i. 8 sqq., attributes the foundation of the Alexandrian Church to Barnabas. Duchesne (*Hist. Anc. de l'Église*, i, p. 332, 2nd ed.) notices as a grave objection to the current tradition that Dionysius the Great (in Eus. vii. 25), when speaking with some particularity of St. Mark, gives no hint that the Evangelist was connected with Alexandria.

[2] See Duchesne, i. 331; Harnack, *Chron.* i. 202. For the little that is known of the Church of Egypt down to Demetrius see Harnack, *Mission*, p. 448 sqq.

[3] See above, p. 290.

the gods of the Nile, Judaism, Christianity, even Brahminism and Buddhism, were all asserting their claims. The famous University[1] served as a great exchange of ideas. The memory of Philo was still cherished. Neoplatonism had nearly attained its perfect expression; Gnosticism had been and still was very powerful in Alexandria.

Possibly the line between Catholicism and the sects was not drawn there with great rigour. Episcopal control was not so severe in Egypt as elsewhere. Demetrius is said to have appointed three suffragan bishops; down to his time the whole country, though there were Christians in all parts,[2] was administered by the one Bishop of Alexandria. Demetrius himself was an unlettered rustic, nominated for the throne, in obedience to a vision, by his predecessor Julianus. Hitherto the twelve presbyters of Alexandria had enjoyed the singular privilege of electing from their own body and of consecrating the bishop, and their ancient right appears to have remained a contested question till the time of Alexander, who succeeded in enacting a canon for its abrogation. The rule of the old presbyter-bishops had probably been much more lenient than that of Demetrius, who proved himself a resolute and masterful prelate.

From the episcopacy of Demetrius begins our knowledge of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. There were similar institutions probably in every diocese. Cyprian had his *presbyteri doctores*, or examining chaplains, and in conjunction with these appointed a Reader to discharge the office of *doctor audientium*, whose duty it would be to give instruction to heathen inquirers.[3] We read also of one Malchion, who was head of the school of Greek literature at Antioch.[4] Such schools would all be dependent on the bishop,[5] but would differ greatly in character according to

[1] The rector of the Museum was the high priest of Alexandria. See Mommsen, *Provinces*, ii. 248.

[2] *Strom.* vi. 18. 167.

[3] *Ep.* 29; see Benson's *Cyprian*, p. 44.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 29. 2.

[5] At any rate this will be true of all the church schools in the time of Demetrius. Justin Martyr appears to have kept a school as a sort of free-lance. There must have been many Gnostic schools, which naturally had no connexion with the bishop.

the locality. In some places they would be merely catechetical; in the centres of intelligence they would follow more ambitious aims, studying and teaching the whole round of Gentile letters and learning (except, indeed, the books of the Epicureans and Sceptics who were accounted atheists) with a careful eye to its bearing upon Christianity; they would cultivate apologetics in the broadest sense of the word. The School of Alexandria was not unlike a missionary college in modern India.

The first master of whom we have any definite information is Pantaenus.[1] He was a converted Stoic philosopher, who visited India as a missionary, and is said to have found there a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew.[2] On his return from this remarkable enterprise he became head of the Alexandrine School.

Titus Flavius Clemens, his successor in office, was probably an Athenian. He seems to have been born of heathen parents. He had travelled far and wide in quest of truth, and studied under many teachers, till at last in Egypt he caught Pantaenus hidden away like a Sicilian bee among the flowers of the apostolical meadow.[3] We may infer from these words that Pantaenus was a man not only of devotion and learning, but of personal charm. Clement himself was caught, received priestly orders, and was appointed master of the Catechetical School, at first probably as assistant to Pantaenus. He appears to have fled from the persecution of Severus in 203, and did not return to Egypt. After this we catch but one glimpse of him, as bearing a letter from

[1] Eus. *H. E.* v. 10. According to Philippus Sidetes Athenagoras preceded Pantaenus, but this statement is very doubtful. See Otto, *Prolegomena to Athenagoras*, p. xxii; Redepenning, *Origenes*, vol. i, p. 63.

[2] Possibly a copy of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. India may mean Afghanistan, or India proper to the west of the Indus, or even some more remote portion of the peninsula. For the traditional journey of St. Thomas to India see the *Acta Thomae*, and for both journeys see *The Syrian Church in India*, by G. Milne Rae.

[3] *Strom.* i. 1. 11. It is not quite clear how many teachers Clement enumerates here, nor who they were, nor does he name Pantaenus, but it may be assumed with confidence that Pantaenus is meant by the 'Sicilian bee'. Was Pantaenus a Sicilian, as Valesius thought? Or is the phrase merely an allusion to Theocritus?

Alexander, then Bishop in Cappadocia, afterwards of Jerusalem, to the Church of Antioch,[1] in which he is warmly commended as having done much to confirm and increase the Church. In a later letter [2] written to Origen, Alexander speaks of 'blessed Pantaenus' and 'holy Clement' with grateful affection. To them he owed much, including his acquaintance with Origen. They had 'gone before', and he hopes 'soon to be with them'. At this time, then, Clement was dead.[3] The time of his chief literary activity seems to have been between 190 and 203, before either Theodotianism or Sabellianism became burning questions. Montanism he knew and intended to write about. With Gnosticism he was very familiar. His chief works, the *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus*, and *Stromateis*,[4] form a trilogy dealing with the three great stages of the Christian life—Conversion, Discipline, and Enlightenment. Another important treatise is the *Quis Dives Salvetur*, which gives the author's view as to the right use of wealth, and contains the beautiful story of St. John and the Robber.[5] It is in these books that we find the full record of his character and inner life. He is one of the most personal and self-revealing of writers, learned and thoughtful but not systematic nor critical; pious, with a high strain of mystical idealism, broad-minded, cheerful and companionable, fond of the comic poets, fond of a good story, and not straitlaced as to the quality of the jest—a most unusual type of cleric, not unlike our own Jeremy Taylor.

His reading was multifarious and extensive. Some of his knowledge, especially of the poets, was derived from anthologies which were very numerous and popular in Alexandria, but much he must have gathered at first hand for himself. Still we can hardly regard him as a profound student. He read like a lover of letters, as one in search of ideas or

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 11. 6. [2] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 14.

[3] Probably about 215; see Duchesne, i, p. 339.

[4] Carpet-bags or Miscellanies, a book title which had been used by Plutarch and was afterwards used by Origen.

[5] For the list of Clement's other works see Dr. Westcott's article in *D. C. B.*; Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchristl. Litt.* i. 296; *Chron.* ii. 3; Bardenhewer, *Gesch. d. altkirchl. Litt.* ii. 15.

impressions, not as one who wants to get to the bottom of things. For erudition he is not to be compared with Origen.

What we ought to notice in Clement is first of all his fine conception of the relation of reason to faith.

Clement was himself in style a rhetorician, but he speaks with great scorn of rhetoricians such as those who are described by Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*. They are 'a river of words, a drop of sense'; they are like 'old boots, of which all but the tongue is worn out'. As to those who gave themselves up to rhetoric, 'as most of the Gentiles do,' he agrees with Philo that they have fallen in love with the handmaid and neglect the mistress. But when Clement turns his eyes upon philosophy he can hardly find words to express his admiration. 'There is one river of Truth,' he says, 'but many streams fall into it on this side and on that.' Truth, again, is like the body of Pentheus, torn asunder by fanatics; each clutches a limb and thinks that he has the whole: a fine simile which Clement borrowed from the Neoplatonist Numenius. To the best of the Gentiles philosophy had been a covenant, justifying them as the Law justified the Jews. For it came from God through His Logos. It is like the burning-glass: its power of kindling is borrowed from the Sun.

No such language had been heard since the time of Justin Martyr, and it gave great offence to those whom Clement calls the Orthodoxasts. These were the 'simpler brethren' of whom Origen speaks, the great body of the Christian community, including many, perhaps most, of the clergy. Their watchword was 'only believe', and they were highly provoked by this audacious attempt to bring Scriptural faith into harmony with the pagan schools. Even the Bishop Demetrius probably was not sorry when Clement was safely out of Alexandria. He did not press his too learned priest to return.

But what use did Clement make of his philosophy? He set entirely upon one side the Father of the New Testament, and launched upon the Church the Neoplatonic doctrine of the Absolute God.

Here we must invert the method followed by Clement

himself. He places the *Protrepticus* first, and in this book the Gentile is supposed to be converted and led up to baptism, which brings him, with a clean blank soul, within the circle of Christian teaching. Next the *Paedagogus* displays the moral discipline by which the Christian man is relieved from passion; this is the Catharsis, or Little Mysteries of the Neoplatonists. Next the *Stromateis* sets forth the manner in which Gnosis or Wisdom penetrates and transforms all the simple virtues and actions of the believer, leading him on to the Great Mysteries, or Epopteia, or Vision of God. The process is inductive, as indeed in experience it is. Nevertheless, as a reasoned system it is deductive, and is most easily expounded by beginning with what Clement regarded as the end.

God, then, is the absolute, and the absolute is found in the usual way by the method of analysis or elimination. 'Stripping away from concrete existence all physical attributes, taking away from it in the next place the three dimensions of space, we arrive at the conception of a point having position.' There is still a further step, for perfect simplicity has not yet been reached. Reject the idea of position, and we have attained the highest and last abstraction, the pure Monad.[1]

This is God the Father. We know that He is; we know also what He is not; what He is reason cannot tell us, except in so far as He is revealed to us in the Logos. He has no qualities, no relations, no names, though we are obliged to give Him titles which are not to be taken in their proper sense—the One, the Good, or Intelligence, or Existence, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord.[2]

Clement was probably familiar with the Neoplatonist writers before he settled at Alexandria and began to study the works of Philo. Probably, therefore, his theology was suggested by Gentiles, and elaborated by help of the great Jew. But Scripture, which he regarded as the final authority, acted as a brake upon his extravagance. He was in the position of a modern divine who, having absorbed the speculations of Fichte or Schelling, wishes to utilize them as far

[1] *Strom.* v. 11. 71. [2] Ib. v. 12. 81, 82.

as the Creed will allow Hence it is impossible for him to call God the Non-existent as Basilides has done, and as Dionysius the Areopagite and Scotus Erigena did afterwards. Nor does he venture to deny to God all knowledge of the world of sense. All he really means is, that God's virtue and mind are not as ours, which is true enough, with the qualification that ours are an imperfect copy of the eternal. But he speaks at times as if he lost sight of this qualification. Man, he says, may become by virtue like the Son, but not like the Father—at any rate not in this life. At other times he talks better sense. When he comes to discuss the subject of punishment, he is compelled to assume that the divine justice is like ours, and in many places he speaks of God as good, just, beneficent, and omniscient. Indeed, one of his cardinal principles, 'that nothing unworthy is to be believed of God,' implies that human reason can decide what is unworthy and what is not.

If God is conceived as the Absolute One, the Son, or Logos—as Clement usually calls Him—must be the One-Many of the Neoplatonists. 'The God, then,' he says, 'being indemonstrable, is not the object of knowledge; but the Son is Wisdom and Knowledge and Truth, and whatever else is akin to these, and so is capable of demonstration and description. All the powers of the divine Nature gathered into one complete the idea of the Son, but He is infinite as regards each of His powers. He is, then, not absolutely One as Unity, nor Many as divisible, but One as All is One. Hence He is All. For He is a circle, all the powers being orbed and united in Him.' [1]

The Son is the circle, of which the Father is the centre point. The original unity, the mysterious Personality which is the source of all, though quite unknown, is now perceived to be a twoness. The ideas appear, revealing the personality to whom they belong, whose offspring they may be said to be. Thus the Word is the Nous or Intelligence of God, of

[1] *Strom.* iv. 25. 156. The word here translated *infinite* is ἀπαρέμφατος. I do not feel quite sure that the translation is correct. In the grammarians ἡ ἀπαρέμφατος is the infinitive mood, or rather the indeterminate mood which does not admit distinctions of number and person.

whom Clement says, sliding back to the traditional language of Christian theology, that He is 'begotten of the will of the Father', that 'He comes forth for the sake of creation'.

Plotinus, a little later in date, spoke of a second concentric circle in which Intelligence becomes discursive Understanding. This is the Third Hypostasis of the Plotinian Trinity, the One and Many as distinct from the One-Many. Earlier Neoplatonists regard the Third Hypostasis rather as the World Spirit, the Aristotelian Nature, as indeed in substance did Philo. Hence they could not help the Christian doctor when he came to speak of the procession of the Holy Spirit, and hence again he is driven upon this article to use the traditional language. What he says here is what Hippolytus said, except for one striking passage in which all rational existence is viewed as a vast and graduated hierarchy, like a chain of iron rings, each sustaining and sustained, each saving and saved—held together by the magnetic force of the Holy Spirit, which is faith.[1]

Clement was no doubt a Subordinationist, in the same sense as the Western doctors of whom we have spoken above. It was a Platonic axiom that the effect is always inferior to the cause. But he puts the relation of the Persons in such a manner that the question of coeternity and even coequality can hardly arise. He has no hesitation in praying directly to the Son; indeed, there are passages which are almost Sabellian in cast. It might be said even, if we confine our attention to his theory, that in his view Christianity is the worship of Christ. Christ is the God, whom alone we can understand, and who therefore alone can be called our God.

The Word took flesh of the Virgin Mary and became Jesus Christ, Very God and Very Man. A few years after Clement Tertullian distinguished the Two Natures in that way, even using those phrases which were finally adopted at Chalcedon, while Hippolytus insisted upon the reality of the humanity with great emphasis. Clement accepts the doctrine of the Two Natures, yet does not allow to the humanity its full value. Like many of the earlier doctors,

[1] *Strom.* vii. 2. 9.

he regards the flesh merely as a veil thrown over the divine Spirit. He is so steeped in Platonism that he can hardly regard a body as capable of any religious value. Hence he teaches that, though Jesus had a soul like ours and a body like ours, yet both soul and body were so purified by union with Christ that they became wholly passionless in the same sense as God Himself. All human desires and emotions, even the most innocent and necessary, were unknown to Him. It would be ridiculous to suppose that the Saviour really needed food; He ate and drank merely in order that His disciples should not fall into the error of Docetism, and think that His humanity was not real.[1] Now, as Jesus Christ is in all things our pattern, we can see at once the grave objections to this high and dry idealism. Earthly love ceases to be a moral motive; and again among desires is the desire for improvement. Yet the objections, as we shall see, are not wholly just. The desire for good has a certain value in Clement's eyes, at any rate in the lower life, the life of ordinary Christians, who are content to do without understanding what the Church enjoins.

By His death upon the Cross Jesus redeemed us, but, out of deference to the Platonic theory that all suffering is corrective, Clement found himself obliged to maintain that the Passion of the Son was not designed by the Father;[2] a singular instance of the straits to which he was sometimes reduced by his fondness for heathen speculation. Our ransom was not the body, but the soul of Jesus.[3] It bestows upon us forgiveness, which is conveyed in baptism, and relieves men, not from the punishment which is really an earnest of God's love, but from the ignorance which is the power of sin. Of the doctrine of original sin Clement had perhaps never heard; at any rate he did not make use of it. The soul, he held, is not inherited from the parents;[4] and Adam was created perfect only as we are ourselves, apt for every virtue, inasmuch as he had not yet been disciplined by obedience.[5] He fell as we all fall, but there

[1] *Strom.* vi. 9. 71. [2] *Strom.* iv. 12. 86.
[3] *Q. D. S.* 37. 42; *Paed.* i. 9. 85, and elsewhere. [4] *Strom.* vi. 16. 135.
[5] *Strom.* iv. 23. 150; vi. 12. 96.

is no entailed necessity between his sin and ours. In baptism all previous sins are blotted out, and this is the only free pardon; all subsequent falls must be atoned for by penance and amendment; after the sacramental washing we are to look not to the crucified, but to the risen Lord.

It is indeed most difficult on Clement's principles to attach any definite sense to the word forgiveness. If sin is merely an act done in ignorance, and chastisement is merely the reverse side of the divine law, by which men are called away from ignorance, it is clear that there can be no such thing as 'letting off', or remission of the wholesome penalty. We must then suppose that the pains entailed by wrongdoing continue in this life and in the life to come until the purgatorial suffering has achieved its object, as sooner or later it must. But, if sin be the resistance of our human will to the will of God, chastisement is punishment, and its general object is not to amend, but to deter, and so to safeguard the divine will or law which alone can amend. Clement's view is not really milder, but harsher. For, upon the other view, the moment resistance ceases punishment will cease. Clement was led to embrace the Platonic theory, that all suffering is purely medicinal, and medicinal only for the offender himself, by his anxiety to demolish the Gnostic evil, or merely just God. We have seen that in consequence he was wholly unable to account for the Passion of Christ, and this ought to have warned him off. But we need say no more until we come to the teaching of Origen, which is much deeper, though still unsatisfactory.

The theology of Clement was of a high intellectual type, and this philosophical tendency led him to lay much stress upon a view which is clearly expressed by Philo, by the Greek schools, and in some degree by earlier Greek Fathers.

Philo divided the moral and spiritual life into two stages, that of the babe and that of the perfect. Probably Philo was here following the lead of the Stoics, who distinguished the proficient from the wise man, the learner, that is to say, from the accomplished moral artist. Plato, Aristotle, and others made a not wholly dissimilar separation between

the life of action and the life of contemplation. We find a similar view even in the New Testament. Martha is the type of the life of action, Mary is the contemplative. St. Paul speaks of the babe and the perfect, of milk and solid food, of faith and knowledge of mysteries, of bondage and adoption, of faith and hope which are less than charity. The same conception of the Christian life as clearly analogous to that of a well-managed school with its graduated classes and subjects, beginning with authoritative dogma and ending in freedom, is found still more expressly in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Many of the earlier Fathers, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, Pinytus of Cnossus, present us more or less distinctly with the same general notion. The difference between the higher and lower stage is usually found in the deeper knowledge of Scripture, which some like Barnabas call Gnosis or allegorism, while others, like Ignatius and the Montanists, derive it from personal inspiration or prophecy. Clement adopts and emphasizes this view. It is not quite the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church. All Christians alike believed that both the babe and the perfect were true members of Christ, though in different stages of sanctification, and relied upon those passages of Scripture which speak of various degrees of reward or of glory in the life to come.

The opinion is so widely diffused that it clearly must have much to recommend it. Clement found in it an effective weapon against Gnosticism. Why, he seems to ask, should men run after Valentinus and his false affectation of profundity of thought? The Church can satisfy every desire of the intelligence. Christian theology is the true Gnosis, the perfect Christian is the true Gnostic.

Again, he found here the answer to another question that was becoming a difficulty. Crowds of ignorant undisciplined heathens were flocking into the Church, bringing their heathen taint with them. Many, no doubt, were beginning to ask what was the minimum condition of salvation. Clement answers, Believe and obey; that is enough, though by no means all.

It would, however, be most unjust to regard the theory of the Two Lives as a mere transaction with the world, as if Clement were here deliberately impressing his sanction upon an inferior morality with a view to attracting into the Church those who were not really Christians at all. From one point of view he was only giving due weight to the parable of the tares and the wheat, which the Montanists and the rigorists in practice refused to apply. But still more, and above all, he was making a bold claim for freedom against the constantly increasing domination of the sacerdotalists, for freedom of thought, at any rate for those who through discipline had attained to holiness and insight, and thus had earned the right to judge for themselves. When a man really was free, a friend and no longer a servant of Christ, not merely repeating but understanding and acting the simple creed of that time, he should no longer be kept in leading strings by the Orthodoxasts. He may then leave school. But he must still respect discipline. He may tell, indeed he ought to tell, those who are still learning the rudiments that a time will come when they also will be free; but in the meanwhile he must leave them to the pedagogue, who knows what is good for them. This is the much misunderstood economy or reserve. These words merely mean that Theology is not a thing to be played with, any more than astronomy. All education must advance by degrees.

Lastly, we should observe that Clement was the first systematic theologian in the East, as Irenaeus had been in the West, and was confronted by the same difficulty, that of reconciling St. Paul with St. John and both with the traditional system of the existing Church. In common with all the earlier Fathers, Clement, though he freely uses the language of St. Paul, did not really understand the leading ideas of St. Paul's teaching.

Thus he speaks of the lower life as guided by three motives, faith, fear, and hope. Faith is such a belief in, or rather such a conviction of, the truth of the Creed as leads to obedience and docility. Faith is chiefly valuable because it bestows fear and hope. Fear of God has at any

rate a negative value—it is a great safeguard; and hope, the hope of reward, is a powerful stimulus to those who do not as yet love virtue for its own sake. Both these motives are good, but both are inferior, because interested. They aid men in subduing evil desires, but do not eradicate all desire. They teach men holiness or purity or self-control, which, though the condition of insight, is not itself insight. They go by the letter, not by the spirit. They constitute a state of salvation, but not of peace, or joy, or spontaneity or victorious activity.

Hence it is by all means desirable that the lower life should pass on and be completed in the higher. In this faith gives place to knowledge, fear and hope to love, holiness to righteousness. Knowledge is the link between lower and higher. It is imparted in germ and promise at baptism, whereby we are brought from darkness into light, and we grow in knowledge as we grow in holiness. With knowledge comes love, the sovereign teacher, for 'the more a man loves the more deeply does he penetrate into God'.[1] Thus finally the believer attains to righteousness—that is to say, to the habitual effortless, unselfish doing of the good will of God, a life of abiding peace and joy.

We find here partly the Aristotelian theory of habit; partly the Platonic way up from the life of sensuality to communion with the ideas; partly again the little and the great mysteries of Eleusis; partly the answer to Gnosticism, with its physical division of men into three classes. Men are not physically different; the three classes, so far as they have a meaning, are three stages of spiritual life. We may and should rise up from the first through the second to the highest.

Thus Clement endeavours to conciliate all the views prevalent in his time among pagans, Gnostics, and Catholics.

By knowledge Clement understands a profounder sense for the teachings of Scripture, acquired partly through holiness in the course of a strenuous personal search after purity, partly through allegorism. It teaches us to see in Scripture not isolated texts, but a consistent and reasonable

[1] *Q. D. S.* 27.

body of doctrine, to grasp what he calls the 'connexion of dogmas'. It is greatly facilitated by education, but all that is absolutely necessary is devout meditation. It is in this sense that he calls upon all Christians to 'philosophize'. Philosophy among the Stoics and Cynics meant nothing but serious reflection upon the few cardinal maxims of their sect and the resolute application of those maxims in life. Indeed, 'Follow Nature' was the one great maxim, and Nature meant 'the God within'.[1] Books and culture they thought almost needless. Any earnest, well-meaning man could be a philosopher, if he chose. In this sense Christianity had been called a philosophy by Justin. After the time of Clement the word was especially applied to the Egyptian monks, who were contemplatives, but not learned men.

Clement brings out very clearly the educational disciplinary view of the religious life. The point at which he lies most open to criticism is his conception of faith. He makes it, in fact, very little more than docility. It is belief in the unseen, and differs from the belief of the evil spirits in that it carries with it not only fear but hope. By virtue of these accessories, through obedience—or as Aristotle says, through habit—it is quickened and becomes a living faith. But why does the repetition of an act make it delightful? What is it that gives habit power? Not merely fear, nor merely hope, but love, which however weak it may be in its inception is yet life. Clement is not wholly unaware of this truth, for he believes in a natural affinity of the soul for God. But his system is too scholastic, sets the effect before the cause and the mechanism before the power. Or we may say he is following the Epistle to the Hebrews, or St. James

[1] In his moral teaching Clement makes use of Stoicism. The same thing is true of the Platonists, strongly as they disliked the metaphysical principles of the Stoics and even some of their moral applications, e. g. their approval of suicide. 'Follow Nature' was a rule accepted by many early Fathers; but by it they meant not 'Follow reason', which was what the Stoic intended, but 'Follow the purpose of God as manifested in Creation'. Thus they forbade the use of tortoiseshell or of cut flowers, because bones and flowers were not created to be employed for personal decoration. Clement's debt to Stoicism has been greatly exaggerated. See de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, p. 315.

rather than St. Paul. Or again, we may say his idea of grace is rather that of Pelagius than that of Augustine.

Again, Clement's doctrine of love is far too deeply coloured by his ruling idea of the apathy of God. What he speaks of is love, not of the divine and crucified man, but of the Logos—that is to say, of abstract goodness. The Gnostic, the perfect Christian, will be as apathetic as his Master, so far as his continuance in the flesh will admit. He will feel those desires which, like hunger or thirst, are necessary for self-preservation; but not joy, sorrow, courage, indignation, or hatred, nor even love in the ordinary sense of the word.

If it be objected that he is confounding life in heaven with life upon earth, he will reply that the Gnostic is so completely one spirit with his Lord that he is in heaven already. He desires nothing, because he already possesses that which alone can be desired. He need not even pray, for he has nothing left to pray for, or rather his whole life will be one prayer.

Thus nearly does Clement approach to the abysses of mysticism. But he was saved from falling into them by his belief that holiness is the preparation for righteousness, and imperfect unless it brings forth its appointed fruit. Contemplation is indeed the Gnostic's chief delight; the next is active beneficence; the third is instruction, the work of making others like himself. He does not neglect the ordinary means of grace—public worship, the reading of Scripture, the Eucharist, almsgiving, fasting; nor prayer at the appointed hours, though his prayer is mainly intercession and thanksgiving. Nor does he look for visions or ecstasies.

Thus Clement comes back, perhaps at some sacrifice of logical consistency, from the Church Triumphant to the Church Militant, and reminds himself that after all he is but a pilgrim upon earth. We may call him the founder of Christian mysticism, though he does not employ the extreme language or recommend the extreme practices of thoroughgoing mystics.

Upon the whole it may be thought that, with the noblest

intentions, Clement made a bad use of his philosophy. He attached no sufficient value either to the Fatherhood of God or to the Humanity of Jesus Christ. Emotion he unduly disparages, and the world he regards too Platonically, as rather a dungeon of the soul, than a divinely-appointed and admirable field for the formation and exercise of the highest Christian perfection. But his merits are so great and so rare that his readers will find themselves indisposed to take a severe view of his aberrations.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ORIGEN

Origen was born in 185 or 186. We have met with him before in the history of the persecutions of Severus and of Decius.

His father was the martyr Leonides. He was probably a native Egyptian, one of the despised fanatical and politically inferior race who formed the lowest class of the population of Egypt. His name, which means 'child of Hor', is derived from one of the great gods of the Nile. Such names were not commonly borne by Christians.[1] From very early times he was called also Adamantius, which is not a name but an honorific title, expressive of his indefatigable labours and of the irresistible force of his reasonings, *Doctor Indefessus* or *Irrefragabilis*, like the titles given by admiring disciples to the great mediaeval schoolmen. He was a pupil of Clement. Upon the death of his father and the flight of Clement from Alexandria, he opened a private school, having six younger brothers and sisters to support. Shortly afterwards Demetrius made him master of the Catechetical School. At this date he was not yet eighteen. Plutarch the martyr, and Heraclas who succeeded Demetrius as Pope of Alexandria, were among his first pupils. From this time he gave himself up to theology and ceased to teach 'grammar', that is to say the elements and the profane classics, sold his library which contained many expensive manuscripts, and out of the money thus obtained secured himself an income of four obols a day, about the wage of a manual labourer, and managed to live upon this scanty sum for many years, teaching and studying all day and great part of the night. This plain living and high thinking Eusebius calls 'philosophizing'. At this time Origen

[1] Thus we find Hermammon, Ammonius, Serapion, Isidorus, &c.

practised extreme asceticism, fasting, sleeping by measure and upon the floor, going barefoot, abstaining from wine; austerities which brought him into serious danger of consumption. So literal was he at first in his interpretation of Scripture that he even made himself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven, an act forbidden under the severest penalties by the Roman law, and condemned by Christian sentiment, if not as yet by canon. Demetrius knew and approved this fanatical zeal.

In the midst of this extremely laborious life Origen found time to attend the lectures of one of the philosophic professors at the Museum.[1] From the professor and perhaps from his own reading Origen acquired a fair knowledge of heathen philosophy. But even towards the end of his life he was capable of failing to see that Celsus was not an Epicurean. He was little interested in psychology or ethics. Indeed his philosophic attainments will hardly strike the reader as equal to those of Clement. Nor did he attach the same high value to them. 'Few,' he says, 'are those who have taken the spoils of the Egyptians and made of them the furniture of the Tabernacle.' Of science he knew only what was generally taught in schools, nor indeed was there much to be known beyond mathematics, and history in the higher sense of the word, we might almost say in any sense, did not exist in the third century. He studied Hebrew also, and obtained help upon difficult points relating to Old Testament criticism from Huillus or Iullus, the Jewish Patriarch of Alexandria.[2] But he did not

[1] It has generally been supposed that the professor in question was the famous Ammonius Saccas on the authority of Porphyry; see Eus. *H. E.* vi. 19. But Porphyry has confused our Origen, whom he can hardly have known personally, with Origen, a well-known Neoplatonist, whom he had met in Rome. Porphyry was not born before 232, and was therefore twenty-two at most when our Origen died. But our Origen must have ceased to lecture in 250, when he was imprisoned, if not some time before. It is therefore most unlikely that Porphyry knew him as a teacher, though he may have heard of him, or seen him. In this same passage Eusebius himself appears to have confounded Ammonius Saccas, who never wrote anything, with a Christian Ammonius, who was author of a volume entitled 'The agreement between Moses and Jesus'; see Bardenhewer, *op. cit.* ii. 163.

[2] Jerome, *Adv. Rufinum*, i. 13; *Selecta in Psalmos*, Lomm. xi. 352.

acquire more than a fair working knowledge of the language. With Latin he seems to have been unacquainted. But about 213 he visited Rome, drawn thither by an anxious desire to see 'that most ancient Church'.[1] It was during the papacy of Zephyrinus, and in the city Origen heard Hippolytus preach. He knew more of the Western world than Clement; more even of the East, for he was a great traveller.

Thus Origen prepared himself for that which was to be the supreme interest of his life, the textual criticism and exegesis of the Bible. Before him there had been many well-read, well-educated men in the Church. But with him begins the age of erudition. There were other notable scholars at the same time, Julius Africanus and Alexander of Jerusalem in the East, Hippolytus in the West, but Origen stands pre-eminent among them all in breadth, insight, originality, and power of combination. Textual criticism in especial was a new feature in the Church. The Gnostic Marcion had essayed it, but in quite arbitrary fashion. Origen was the first Churchman to collate MSS., to collect and estimate various readings which were already very numerous. He learned his method from the great Alexandrine grammarians and their work upon the text of Homer. The critical signs which he employed in his edition of the Septuagint, the *obeli* with which he noted additions to the original, the *asterisks* which marked possible omissions, were borrowed from their usage.

Down to 232 Origen still continued to dwell at Alexandria, teaching, studying, and writing. He obtained the assistance of Heraclas, a friend and fellow student, afterwards bishop in succession to Demetrius, in the management of the school which had grown too large for his own unaided supervision, and Ambrosius, a wealthy man of high position, whom he had converted from Gnosticism, provided him with a large staff of stenographers and calligraphists, a necessary equipment in those days for any man of letters. Ambrosius also perpetually spurred him on to fresh exertions, and suggested to him new subjects. To him, 'my

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 14. 10.

taskmaster,' as Origen calls him, is dedicated the *Commentary on St. John*. The books *against Celsus* were written to satisfy him. The *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, equal in constancy but far superior in tenderness and spiritual wisdom to the parallel treatise of Tertullian, was composed for the comfort of Ambrosius and Protoctetus, who had been banished to Germany by Maximin in 236, and another admirable treatise, that on *Prayer*, is addressed to Ambrosius and Tatiana.

The reputation of Origen had already spread so far and so high that, in the reign of Caracalla, the governor of Arabia sent for him, and a few years later, perhaps in 218, the Empress-mother Mamaea summoned him to Antioch, both for the purpose of religious conferences. He corresponded also with the Emperor Philip and his wife Severa. We find him also journeying into Greece, and at a later date to Bostra in Arabia, to compose the difficulties of the Churches. It is clear that as yet no alarm was felt at the nature of his teaching. Further, we notice that he was by no means a mere scholastic recluse. His pupil, Gregory Thaumaturgus, has left us a rhetorical but evidently sincere account of his manner of teaching, dwelling with enthusiasm upon the personal fascination, and the large and loving knowledge of souls, which made the great doctor irresistible.

In 215, alarmed by Caracalla's massacre of the Alexandrians, Origen retired to Caesarea, and remained there for some time. Here the bishops Theoctistus of Caesarea and Alexander of Jerusalem, both his fellow pupils and attached friends, invited him to preach in church and in their presence, though he was a layman. In this they were following precedents. But Demetrius highly resented their action, and sent his deacons with a peremptory written order to Origen to return to Alexandria at once and resume his duties in the school. Origen obeyed, perhaps with reluctance. In 230, as he passed through Caesarea on his way to Greece, the same two prelates ordained him priest. This was regarded by Demetrius as an unpardonable offence. He called together a synod of bishops and

priests, but could only succed in obtaining from this mixed body a sentence of banishment from Alexandria. Not satisfied with this he convoked a second synod of bishops alone, and with their assent degraded Origen from the priesthood. It is probable that the Alexandrian presbyters, still resenting the loss of their ancient prerogatives, were not disinclined to resist their bishop. What were the actual reasons that weighed with Demetrius we do not precisely know. The ordination of one of his own men by foreign bishops would no doubt be a high provocation. Further, if he himself had cherished any intention of ordaining Origen, he would have executed it long before. There must have been something in his mind which he regarded as unfitting Origen for ecclesiastical promotion. This was probably that unfortunate act of excessive zeal, of which mention has been made above, but there may have been also doctrinal reasons. For fifteen or sixteen years later [1] Origen appealed to Fabian of Rome and many other bishops, protesting his orthodoxy. This he would hardly have done unless his opinions had been part at any rate of the charges urged against him.

Many of the rulers of the Church, including Fabian, accepted the decision of Demetrius. But the Bishops of Palestine, Cappadocia, Arabia, Achaia, and Pontus refused to endorse it. It is singular that Heraclas and Dionysius, the two next Bishops of Alexandria, both of them, but more especially the latter, united to Origen by very close ties, were unable or unwilling to remove his disgrace. No doubt he felt the stigma, but he found consolation partly in the undiminished affection of his friends in the East, partly in his strong belief that ecclesiastical censures, if unjust, are of no weight in the eyes of God.

At Caesarea henceforth Origen made his home, and carried on there his school with the full approval of the Palestinian prelates. Among his pupils were even bishops,

[1] About 246, Harnack following the time-indication of Eus. *H. E.* vi. 36; Bardenhewer would place the incident immediately after the death of Demetrius in 231 or 232, at which time Origen may have hoped for rehabilitation from Heraclas.

Alexander, Theoctistus, and Firmilian of Cappadocia, the friend and correspondent of Cyprian. Gregory Thaumaturgus, the future Bishop of Neocaesarea and apostle of Pontus, was arrested on the way to the school of Roman law at Berytus by the fame of the philosophic theologian at Caesarea, turned his way thither, surrendered himself wholly to the charm of Origen, and changed the plan of his life accordingly. During the persecution of Maximin Origen is said to have retired to Caesarea in Cappadocia, in the diocese of his friend Firmilian, where he found shelter in the house of Juliana.[1] Twice he journeyed into Arabia to Bostra, where he was already known, once to visit the bishop Beryllus, who had been teaching a form of Sabellianism, again to confer with a party who taught, like Tatian, that the soul perishes at death with the body but is re-created with the body at the Last Day.[2] From Caesarea he travelled also to Athens,[3] and made many pilgrimages into the Holy Land: on one of these he convinced himself that Bethabara was the correct reading in John i. 28.

In the persecution of Decius he was imprisoned and grievously ill used. So severe were his tortures that, though he was released, he died in 254 in the reign of Gallus. He was buried at Tyre, where he would appear to have been staying when the end came.

The volume of his literary production was enormous, and as he did not begin to publish till after 218, and from 250 to the date of his death wrote nothing but letters, the vast mass of his compositions falls within a period of about thirty years. We must remember that it was his habit to dictate to a shorthand writer. He wasted no time in polishing his style, which is generally loose and prolix.

[1] Palladius, *Hist. Lau.* p. 160, ed. Butler.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 33. 37. For this peculiar doctrine about the soul cp. Tatian, *Or. ad Graecos*, 13, and note in Otto, p. 58. Tertullian was acquainted with and rejected a similar doctrine, *De Anima*, 58. The root of all these opinions is perhaps to be found in Justin Martyr, *Trypho*, 4 sqq., where 'the old man', who first implanted in Justin's mind an inclination towards Christianity, teaches that the soul is immortal, not in itself but by the will of God.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 32.

He himself contrasts the *amaritudo* of his own mode of expression with the *lenitas* of Alexander, the 'Pope' of Jerusalem.[1] His eloquence is not in the least that of the fashionable rhetoricians: it is due to his simplicity and directness, to the loftiness of his thoughts, and the passion of sincerity which informs every word.

If we leave out of sight the books *against Celsus*, of which something has already been said, Origen's work was in the main Scriptural, dealing with the text and with the exegesis of the Bible. He was, perhaps, the first who distinctly saw that for the theologian, whatever may be his immediate object, controversy,[2] edification, or doctrine, the prime necessity is a sound text. This he endeavoured to supply with infinite labour. The idea and the effort to realize it were magnificent. If the success attained was by no means complete, the same thing may be said of the greatest pioneers. In this department Origen was following the lead of the famous Alexandrian grammarians in their work upon Homer.

His monumental achievement was the *Hexapla* or Sixfold Old Testament. In this were exhibited in six parallel columns the Hebrew text, the same in Greek characters, the translation of Aquila, that of Symmachus, that of the Septuagint, and that of Theodotion. An abbreviated edition, omitting the first two columns, was known as the *Tetrapla*. Two and even three anonymous partial versions were also employed; hence some copies of the work possessed eight columns, and were known as *Octapla*. An important

[1] *In Sam. Hom.* i, ed. Lomm. xi, p. 290.

[2] Origen's object was no doubt partly controversial, especially with reference to the Jews. The Christian was constantly baffled by the objection that texts upon which he relied, e.g. Matt. i. 23, did not bear in the original the meaning which the LXX gave them, and that books which he valued were not in the Hebrew Canon, e.g. the Story of Susanna. Julius Africanus with true critical insight agreed that this could not have had a Hebrew original because it contained plays upon words (σχῖνος, σχίσις, πρῖνος, πρῖσις) possible in Greek but not in Hebrew. Origen was only half convinced, urging the danger of unsettling the minds of Church people. Yet the plan of the Hexapla showed no want of courage; it brought all the evidence frankly before the eyes of all its readers. But Origen could not judge for himself on points involving a scholarly knowledge of Hebrew.

peculiarity of the work was that in the LXX columns Origen not only marked with an obelus, the usual sign of an interpolation, passages that were not found in the Hebrew, but also placed an asterisk, the usual sign of a lacuna, at points where something which existed in the Hebrew had been omitted. These latter passages he actually supplied by insertions from the other versions, chiefly from Theodotion. This mode of procedure has caused great trouble to modern scholars, making it extremely difficult, and in places impossible, to ascertain what was the precise text of the Septuagint before the recension of Origen.[1] The work or works were of such enormous bulk and costliness that they were seldom or never copied in their integrity. The originals remained in the Library of Pamphilus at Caesarea, down probably to the Arab conquest. But the fifth column containing the LXX was separately issued, and continued to be the standard text in Palestine. Existing transcripts still present us with notes showing by whom, and with what loving care, the *Exemplaria Adamantii* were prepared. 'Antoninus, the confessor, compared' the copy with the original; 'Pamphilus corrected the volume in prison' is one. 'I, Eusebius, added the marginal scholia; we, Pamphilus and Eusebius, corrected' is another. Here we have the names of the chief officers of the great Caesarean library in the time of Diocletian; here we see the conscientious accuracy with which MSS. were prepared for use. First the calligraphist, then the reader, or comparer, lastly the corrector.

Other scholars, inspired by the example of Origen, laboured upon the text of the LXX. In the time of St. Jerome the recension of Hesychius was current in Egypt, while that of Lucian was used in the churches between Constantinople and Antioch.

The *Hexapla* may be regarded as the great substructure on which the temple of exegesis was to be built. The

[1] See Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*; Dr. Taylor's article 'The Hexapla', in *D. C. B.*; Schürer, *Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, iii. 312 foll.; *Gesch. d. altchristl. Litt.* 339; Bardenhewer, op. cit. ii. 83; Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, p. 59 sqq.

principles which were to guide Origen in the interpretation of Scripture were laid down in the *De Principiis*, one of the earliest of his works, written at Alexandria and applied in an immense series of *Scholia*, *Homilies*, and *Tomes*. In one or another of these ways Origen expounded nearly every book of the Bible, and many books were treated in all three ways.

The *Scholia* were brief notes, such as we have seen Eusebius adding in the margin of the *Exemplaria Adamantii*.

The *Homilies* were sermons, delivered after Origen's ordination, and therefore belonging to his Caesarean time. They were, for the most part, extempore, but not wholly. After 246 they were taken down as delivered by shorthand writers. Origen preached almost daily. The sermons were long and made a considerable demand upon the intelligence; and these may be the reasons why he frequently complains of the restlessness and inattention of his hearers, especially of the women among them.

It has been supposed that the Preaching, or Homily, or Discourse was a survival of the ancient prophesying, but this may be regarded as an error.[1] The words all signify an instructive discourse, such as was commonly delivered by philosophers, and the only sermon which remains to us from an earlier date, the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, bears this character; it is a moral and doctrinal instruction, read in church by a presbyter immediately after the Lesson. About the time of Origen, Paul of Samosata was introducing a new style, flowery, rhetorical, enforced by gesticulation, and courting applause, which was freely given. This was regarded as profane; the day of the pulpit orator had not yet dawned. We have noticed more than once that prophecy differs widely from preaching in place, in time, and in subject. The sermon was what it always has been, an expounding or opening of Scripture. Origen's Homilies, based as they were on the Lesson for the

[1] κήρυγμα, ὁμιλία, διάλεξις; Irenaeus left behind him a volume of διαλέξεις, by which we are to understand sermons, Eus. *H. E.* v. 26; certainly this is the meaning of the word in v. 20. 6, where it is used by Irenaeus of the sermons of Polycarp. Διαλέγεσθαι means to preach in Eus. *H. E.* vi. 19. 16.

day, formed a regular commentary on the book of Scripture that was being read in church at the time. He professes indeed that, owing to the mixed character of the audience, he was unable to produce his deepest thoughts, but in truth the Homilies are as full of allegorism as the *Tomi*. So far as they differ, it is because Origen pays less attention in the Homilies to the literal sense.

The *Tomi*, or Commentaries, are built upon the plan of giving first the literal, then the moral, then the spiritual sense of each verse in succession. All the wealth of his knowledge, his speculations, his hopes, is tossed down before his readers. Hence, though they abound, as indeed do the Homilies, in golden thoughts, there is much repetition and plan there is none. Any word may open out a train of soaring ideas reaching through all Scripture and all time. The *Commentary on St. John*, whose Gospel he regarded as the flower of the whole Bible, is the most highly prized. For instruction the *Commentary on St. Matthew* is superior. But those who desire to see Origen at his best will seek him where he is least allegorical, in his books *against Celsus*, or in the treatises on *Prayer* and on *Martyrdom*.

Our estimate of the services of Origen as a commentator depends very largely on our view of allegorism. This mode of interpretation depends mainly upon two incompatible conditions: the existence of an ancient body of writings regarded as verbally inspired, and the desire to adapt them to the moral and intellectual requirements of a later age. The method of allegorism had been introduced by Greek philosophers, especially by the Stoics, to defend the Homeric myths by turning them into parables of natural science. It was adopted wholesale by Philo to defend the Hebrew Scriptures by turning them into parables of philosophy. In the sub-apostolic Church, in the Epistle of Barnabas, it appears as typology and essays to demonstrate the unity of the whole Bible. In this limited sense allegorism was in universal use, and was guided not by Philo or philosophy but by the methods of the Rabbis. Origen is remarkable not for his adoption of allegorism but for the manifold directions in which he employs it.

Taking his start from the undoubted fact that things of the mind can only be described in metaphors, he attributes to Scripture in general three senses, the literal, the moral, and the spiritual, and proceeds to interpret his two authorities, Scripture and the Creed,[1] in the light of this principle. We shall obtain the best view of his merits and defects as a commentator by considering the five main objects which he had in view.

I. He employed his doctrine of the Three Senses first of all in a negative, defensive, apologetic manner against Gnostics and against Greek critics who were beginning to study the Bible in a spirit of not wholly unfriendly curiosity. The former constructed their system largely upon the moral anomalies of the Old Testament; the latter complained that Scripture was not only unscientific, but vulgar, because it descends to homely details of life quite unworthy of a sacred book, and because in the Greek version, with which alone they were acquainted, the expression is often barbarous and unintelligible. Origen felt all these objections very acutely. He met them by the assertion that innumerable passages in both Testaments have no literal sense at all. Such are those which speak of morning and evening before the creation of the sun, the six days of Creation, the story of the Fall, the carrying up of our Lord into an exceeding high mountain by Satan in the Temptation. These were physically impossible. Others again are morally impossible: those which speak of the child as punished for the sin of the parent, the law that on the Sabbath no Jew should take up a burden or move from his place, the wars of extermination, the imprecatory Psalms, even certain precepts of the Saviour—not to possess two coats, to pluck out the offending eye, to turn the right cheek to him that has smitten the left. Other passages again are too trivial, such as the mention of the wells of

[1] In two passages Origen sets out the Creed or *Regula Fidei*: in *De Princ.* preface, and *In Matth. Comm. Series* 33; Lomm. iv, p. 252 sq. In the latter place he sets orthodoxy even above morality. In *In Ezech. Hom.* vii. 3, Lomm. xiv. 99, he maintains that a heretic whose moral life is good is worse, because more dangerous, than one whose moral life is evil. Always he insists strongly that all his speculations lay within the lines of the Creed.

water given by Caleb to his daughter Achsa, or the list of the stopping-places of the Hebrew army in the march through the desert. All this, creditable as it is to the courage and insight of Origen, is yet bad criticism, as is evident from the fact that his method has the extraordinary result of turning the least important passages of Scripture into the most important. For, though these passages have in his view no literal sense, they have to be explained. They would not be found in Scripture unless they were challenges to reflection, the rough husk which repels the ignorant and careless, but stimulates the child of God to redoubled exertions. The letter of Scripture is the external garb, often squalid and worthless, but 'the king's daughter is all glorious within', if we have eyes for the beauties of the spirit. Thus the more impossible the text, the greater the mysteries which are struggling to manifest themselves.

II. Again, Origen used the Three Senses to bring into harmony the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures, in other words for the old typological purpose. In this he differs from his predecessors and contemporaries only in the amazing fertility of his imagination, and like them he ran into great excesses. We may allow that the Old Testament is seed, preparation, shadow, prophecy, while the New is substance and fulfilment. The two are one, as the child and the man are one. But there has been growth, and in this mysterious process some imperfections have been purged away, and some fresh life infused. The end is like the beginning, but it is also unlike. The sea is not the same as the river, or the brook. Hence it is not possible, by a Rabbinical process of juggling with names, numbers, and even letters, to bring the two Testaments into such proximity that the second could be reconstructed without much difficulty from the first. Origen's idea and method are both perverse. But this use of allegorism struck deep root, largely through the influence of Origen, and issued in the transfer of great portions of the Mosaic law into the system of the Church.

III. Allegorism gave Origen also his interpretation of

Nature. Here he was guided largely by the parables, and the best illustration will be found in what he says of the grain of mustard seed. God made man in His own image and likeness, and so perhaps He made other creatures in the image and likeness of other heavenly things. Hence the grain of mustard may be a parable of the kingdom of Heaven. . . . Again, it is a symbol of faith, for it is written, 'If a man have faith as a grain of mustard seed.' There are then in this one seed many virtues serving as signs of heavenly things, and of these virtues the last and lowest is that whereby it ministers to our bodily needs. So with all else that God made; it is good for the use of man, but it bears also the imprint of mysteries, and by these the soul is taught and elevated to the contemplation of the invisible and eternal. Nor is it possible for man, while he lives in the flesh, to know anything that transcends his sensible experience except by seizing and deciphering this imprint. For God has so ordered the creation, has so linked the lower to the higher by subtle signatures and affinities, that the world we see is, as it were, a great staircase by which the mind of man must climb upwards to spiritual intelligence.[1] This is what has been called the sacramental view of Nature, or, by another name, the argument from design, familiar to theologians, poets, and philosophers. It was the great weapon of the Church in the controversy against Gnostic pessimism; it was also the best corrective of the too metaphysical theology of Clement, and, in spite of all the difficulties that have been raised by modern science, it is a belief that religious men will not easily renounce.

IV. The fourth use to which Origen put his allegorism is of vastly more importance, is indeed of permanent value. The profound antithesis between letter and spirit, between shadow and substance, between the transient and the eternal, in a word his Platonic idealism, gave him on the one side what we may well call the finest conception of the Christian God as yet attained, while on the other it led him into definite antagonism to the growing sacerdotalism of the age.

[1] *In Cant. Cant.* iii, Lomm. xv. 48; *Philoc.* i. 1–27, 30, ed. Robinson.

As to his theology. Clement, by the unbridled use of the method of analysis, or, as it is also called, the *via negativa*, had been brought to conceive of God the Father as the Absolute, and thus removed the supreme object of adoration entirely out of the sphere of human intelligence. Origen substitutes for the idea of the Absolute that of the Transcendent; in other words he regards the world as existing in God as its cause, in such a way that the cause, being vastly superior to its effect, spreads out into inconceivable heights and depths beyond the world. Thus God is, partly and in a way, comprehensible; partly incomprehensible, yet again in such a way that by moral and spiritual assimilation we may draw ever nearer and nearer to Him until at last we become able to behold Him as He is. It is the teaching of St. Paul. Here we know but in part; we see as in a glass darkly; but there will come a time when we know even as we are known.

The manner in which the notion of Transcendence is worked out is highly remarkable. God is pure Spirit, eternal, immutable, immaterial. The laws of time and space do not apply to Him, and no language which, however remotely, involves the ideas of time and space can be used of Him with truth. Thus it is only by a metaphor that we can speak of Him as in heaven. Heaven is, on the contrary, in God, and is not a place, but a spiritual condition. Again, to say that God is immanent in the world is sheer Pantheism, unless the expression is most carefully guarded. The right manner of statement is that the world is in God; it is in God, Plotinus says, 'as a net is in the sea,' contained but not containing, pervaded by an element which it in no way restrains or bounds; and this is the meaning of Origen also.

Again, the word Infinite is inapplicable. It is absurd, and meaningless in such a connexion, for it denotes nothing but the absence of a measurable circumscription, and no man in his senses would think of drawing a line round a thought, any more than he would try to paint geometry. But it is also mischievous. The infinite is that which has no law, no plan, nothing which the mind can grasp. It is

therefore unreasonable, and cannot be understood by any reason, human or divine. Intelligence is necessarily limited by its own nature; it understands only what can be understood. Therefore, says Origen, 'if God's power were infinite He Himself could not understand it.' Again, 'He is Almighty because He is Ruler of all that is'; and all that is He created on a definite, intelligible plan.

In other words, our natural knowledge of God is true as far as it goes. There are depths which we cannot as yet fathom, not because they are unreasonable, but because as yet they lie beyond our experience. Nothing is 'against Nature', nor can be so. But there are things which are 'above Nature', which are in our present condition uncomprehended. By this distinction Origen defended miracles, especially that of the Resurrection.

If any one is startled by these thoughts, let it be observed that all that Origen did was to substitute the title Perfect for that of Infinite. He thought this change of the greatest moral importance, for the current ideas of the omnipotence of God, he says, led the 'simpler brethren' to believe of God what they would be slow to attribute to the most cruel and unjust of men.

It will be remembered how strongly Clement insists upon the apathy of God. Origen, while agreeing that the Changeless and Perfect cannot be thought of as swept by passions such as agitate the half-animal man, yet hints in a tentative way that even pure reason has its rational emotions. 'The Father and God of all,' he writes, 'is long-suffering, merciful, and pitiful. The Father Himself is not impassive; He has the passion of love.'[1] It is to be regretted that this alluring theme was not further developed.

In the unity of this Deity there existed, according to the universal Christian tradition, a Trinity of Persons, to use the Western phrase, of Hypostases, according to the technical language beginning to shape itself in the East. We have already seen how the mystery of the economy

[1] *In Ezech. Hom.* vi. 6, Lomm. xiv. p. 88; cp. *In Num. Hom.* xxiii. 2, Lomm. x. pp. 275 foll.

was forced into discussion in Africa and at Rome by the rise of Sabellianism. Clement hardly appears to have heard of this debate, and his language has at times almost a Sabellian ring. Origen lived in the midst of it, and emphatically dwells upon the personal distinction.

Origen had the great advantage of knowing exactly what he meant by Spirit, and has no difficulty in conceiving how three Divine Spirits might be One and yet Three, distinct yet not separate. In one passage he used the word Homoousion, but this word was in ill repute; it had been used by Gnostics, it was not scriptural but scholastic, and did not bear by any means the sense impressed upon it by the Nicenes. Hence Origen disliked the term, as did most of the educated Greek Fathers, and preferred to express the same idea in other language. In his eyes the Unity consists in the perfect harmony of Three exactly similar Divine Spirits, or in an interpenetration of the Three, such as was afterwards denoted by the technical word Circumincession.[1]

Down to this point Origen is in strict agreement with the *Nicaenum*. The Second Person is by nature Son of God. The Father is always Father. The Father exercises His omnipotence through the Son. The word 'generation' is not to be understood in a human sense, and does not imply separation. Nor does it denote an action in time. 'The Father did not beget His Son, and let Him go from Himself, but is always begetting Him.'[2] There can be no doubt as to the coeternity of the Son. Was He also in Origen's belief coequal?

We have seen the great stress laid by Tertullian, Hip-

[1] See *C. Celsum*, viii. 12, where John xiv. 11, x. 30, are explained by Acts iv. 32. Origen proceeds, "Ενα οὖν θεόν, ὡς ἀποδεδώκαμεν, τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν θεραπεύομεν . . . θρησκεύομεν οὖν τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὄντα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα, ἓν δὲ τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ καὶ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ βουλήματος. This mode of expressing the Unity was held by Arians, was highly disapproved by Athanasius, *C. Arianos*, iii. 10, was called blasphemous by the Council of Sardica; see Theod. *H. E.* ii. 8. 44. On the other hand it is not excluded by the Nicene Creed; and is expressly affirmed by the Lucianic Creed of Antioch, which was of great authority in the East; see Socrates, *H. E.* ii. 10. The same opinion was censured, in the case of Abbot Joachim of Flora, by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

[2] *In Ierem. Hom.* ix. 4 *ad finem.*

polytus, and Novatian upon derivation and subordination. Indeed, it is true of all previous writers, that by the One God they mean the Father, that they regard Son and Spirit as receiving from the will or wisdom of the Father His own peculiar nature, as being divine because He gave them all He is and all that They are, in order that They might be perfect ministers of His counsels. Only in this manner did these writers think it possible to defend themselves against the charge of polytheism. All these ideas are shared by Origen; thus he speaks of Christ as God but not the God, just as the later Creed calls Him 'God of God, Light of Light', as eternal yet not without a principle of existence. In one passage he even uses, though not without hesitation, the phrase of Justin, 'the second God.'[1] Always he is guided by the language of the Gospels, 'My Father is greater than I'; 'My God and your God'; 'That they should know Thee, the only true God'; 'None is good but One.' The last passage in particular appeared to Origen to be of extreme significance. Very Wisdom, Christ is, Very Righteousness, Very Truth, possibly Very King. But not Very Goodness; this title He Himself has told us is reserved for the Father alone. At most we may say that He is the perfect image of the Father's goodness; that His goodness is to us what the Father's goodness is to Him, that is to say the supreme object of desire.[2] Here Origen is manifestly struggling against the traditional subordinationism, somewhat at the expense of logic. The Father alone is 'The Good'. Of this one point at any rate we are assured by the words of the Saviour Himself.

It will be observed that Origen here makes the Father the supreme object of adoration, differing in this from Clement. This point he further emphasizes by maintaining that prayer, though in some of its many uses it may be addressed to Christ, or angels, or saints, yet in the highest sense of all can be directed only to the Father in the name of the Son.

[1] *C. Celsum*, v. 39.

[2] See the original Greek of *De Princ.* i. 2. 13, given not by Rufinus but by Justinian, *Ad Menam* in Hard. *Conc.* t. iii, p. 273. Cp. *In Matth.* xiv. 7; xv. 10.

Down to this point Origen's doctrine is strictly in accord with the older theology and even with the later as represented, not indeed by Athanasius, but by the Fathers of Antioch. Generally speaking, the Father is regarded as superior to the Son because he is Father, *non statu sed gradu, nec potestate sed specie*, as Tertullian says.[1] But there are certainly passages where Origen goes further, and hints at a real inferiority of power. Thus the Father's knowledge of Himself may be greater than the Son's knowledge of the Father; the glory which the Father has in Himself may be greater than that which He has in His Son. In these speculations, which Origen held not to be precluded by the terms either of Scripture or of the *Regula Fidei*, he was thought to point in the direction of Arianism, vastly as his principles differed from those of Arius.

As to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we find the same cautious restraint in Origen as in all earlier writers, except Tertullian, and indeed in all later writers down to Gregory Nazianzen. Origen, in the Ecclesiastical Tradition, that is to say in the Creed, and in the baptismal formula, found the Holy Spirit named, though only named, with the Father and the Son, and teaches accordingly that He is one of the adorable Trinity, associated in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son. It followed that He is a Person, distinct yet never separated from the other Persons, and eternal as They are.

It is He that in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters. He is to be understood both in the Old and in the New Testament by the words Spirit or Holy Spirit. His special office is that of sanctification. The Father gives being to all that exists; the Son imparts reason to all that are capable of the gift; the Holy Spirit imparts eternal life to all those who believe. Hence, though all men share in the First and Second Persons, not all men share in the Third. The Holy Spirit creates in man the capacity to receive Christ, first as Justice, then as Wisdom, and so on through the ever rising gradations of Christian experience, till at last the gift of being becomes fully worthy of the Giver. Man is

[1] *Adv. Praxean*, 2.

made good, and permanently good, by the ceaseless ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Thus it may be said that Son and Holy Spirit are the cause of the knowledge of the Father, that the Holy Spirit is the substance of the graces of the Father.

Origen had no technical term to denote the special relation of the Third to the other Persons. 'Procession' was stamped with its peculiar theological sense first by St. Basil. Again, subordinationism here produces much the same results as in the doctrine of the Son. Indeed, as the Son derives His being immediately from the Father, while the Spirit depends immediately upon the Son and only mediately upon the Father, whatever considerations suggest a real inferiority in the former apply with even greater force to the latter.[1] Later theology, when charitably disposed, has excused these peculiarities of Origen's teaching on the ground that the points in question had not yet been decided by the Church.

Such was allegorism as applied by Origen to the metaphysical side of theology. It was, in fact, the use of a modified Platonism to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. We may say that Origen employed his philosophy to interpret the Saviour's words 'God is Spirit'; and in this direction a great part of Origen's thought was freely adopted by the Church. But if we turn to practical theology we find the same method employed in a different way. Here allegorism appears as what we call Protestantism, and aims at securing at any rate the intelligent believer from sacerdotal control which was already becoming onerous. Yet it is still the same habit of thought steadily preferring the spirit to the letter, the heavenly reality to the earthly figure. It was in this aspect that Origen was so dear to the fathers of the English Reformation.

Thus, though he firmly holds to the analogy between the

[1] See the tortuous and hesitating discussion of this point in *In Ioann.* ii. 6. But it should be noticed that Origen thought there was even less reason for attributing any creaturely inferiority to the Spirit than to the Son. In the LXX version of Prov. viii. 22 he believed κτίζειν to be used of the latter, but in no passage of the Bible could he find any similar expression applied to the Spirit; *De Princ.* i. 3. 3.

Christian and the Mosaic hierarchy, and regards the priest not as a representative of the congregation but as an ambassador of God, he regards the good layman as a true priest, not indeed officially, but in the moral or spiritual sense, that is to say, in the higher sense of the name. Thus he says again that the promise of the keys, given by Christ to St. Peter, was given to all Christians whose faith is like that of Peter.[1] The good priest is a mediator, but the bad priest loses all power, even that of absolution. In any case, the priest declares absolution but does not bestow it. Nevertheless, the priest's office is to be respected. He alone may teach; he has received judgement of souls; it is his duty to stablish the converted sinner. He is to invite confession, both public and private, and to declare the kind and degree of penance by which the sinner may gain restoration to the peace of the Church. He is, in fact, the King's judge, but he may be a very bad one, and in that case his sentence will not be confirmed by his Master.

In the same allegorical manner he treats the words altar, sacrifice. The Church on earth has an altar consecrated by the precious blood of Christ. But in another and deeper sense Christ is Himself the altar whereupon the believer lays his own sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; or again, the believer is the altar on which Christ presents His own sacrifice to the Father. Again, as to the Eucharistic offering, the 'simpler brethren' believed in a real corporal presence, which led them to attach a superstitious value to the actual elements. 'Let them think so,' says Origen,[2] 'but those who have learned to understand more deeply will think not of the material bread, but of the divine promise of the nourishing word of truth.' The Bread has become by the prayer 'a kind of holy and sanctifying body'. A kind of body, something that may be called, by an easy and intelligible metaphor, a body. But the Eucharist is a mystery, that is to say, it has an inner spiritual meaning which is intelligible only to the advanced Christian. The belief of the 'simpler brethren' is not exactly wrong, but

[1] *In Matth.* xiii. 31; *De Orat.* 14.

[2] *In Ioann.* xxxii. 24 (16).

it marks a lower stage of discipleship. It ought to rise from the letter to the spirit, and see in the Bread the word of righteousness, in the Wine the word of the knowledge of Christ. When this insight has been attained, the crude literal interpretation will fall away of itself quite naturally.

It may be said that Origen does not adequately realize the importance of our Lord's humanity. It is true that he regards it as more than the mere veil of the divinity. But he considers the humanity too much as the necessary staircase up which we climb to the understanding of the divinity. The humanity is mainly the object of the faith of the 'simpler brethren'; hence Origen goes so far as to say that Jesus Christ and He crucified is the Gospel as preached to babes.[1] So again our ransom is not the body, but the soul of Christ,[2] though it should be observed that soul means the animal life with its emotions, and includes the blood.[3] Still it is not untrue to say that Origen regards the humanity not as the vehicle, but as the throne of the divinity. For the rest, it is abundantly clear that he is to be reckoned among the symbolists, whose doctrine of the Eucharist was predominant in the ante-Nicene age.

It is to be noticed that even these theological speculations were allegorisms or mysteries; the two words differ only in that allegorism is the method by which mysteries are discovered. They belong, therefore, to the realm of the cultivated Christian intelligence. They are not to be imposed upon the 'simpler brethren', for whom the plain statements of the Creed are sufficient. They are not dogmas, nor are they to be used as tests of orthodoxy. They may even shock the plain Christian man, who has little capacity for subtleties of thought. Hence they ought to be handled with economy or reserve, with a certain tenderness and prudence, not prematurely thrust upon either heathen or immature believers.

Both Clement and Origen were willing to tolerate a certain measure of superstition, formalism, Pharisaism in the Church, provided that it was kept within the limits of

[1] *In Ioann.* i. 18 (20). [2] *In Matth.* xvi. 8, Lomm. iv. 28.
[3] *De Princ.* ii. 8. 1.

the Creed, that it was regarded as a transitory and imperfect condition, and that the door was left wide open for those who could and would to enter into spiritual freedom.

V. Fifthly, Origen used his allegorism as a substitute for prophecy, which he believed to be extinct; as a means, that is to say, of extorting from Scripture by a more scholarly and profound exegesis full light upon the history of the soul before and after its appearance upon the stage of earthly experience.

He greatly desired this knowledge in itself, but far more because without it he felt that he could not explain the justice of God, and therefore could not attack the errors of Gnosticism at their root. Clement had been content to maintain, in his genial optimistic fashion, that justice is the reverse side of goodness, that chastisement and pain are inflicted in pure love and mercy, to call the sinner back from his evil ways. Origen quite agreed with his predecessor upon this point. But with characteristic fearlessness he felt that this easy solution did not meet the whole of the difficulty. For there are grievous sufferings to which we are subjected from the moment of birth. We are born unequal in body, in local and social environment, in mental capacity. Where, then, is justice to be found? It must be admitted that this is a formidable question.

Origen found the solution in the belief in the preexistence of the soul. He found endless hints of this in Scripture, often in the most extraordinary places—for instance, in the list of the camps of the Hebrew army in their march through the desert—but the real source of his belief is to be found beyond a doubt in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* of Plato.

This world that we know is but a brief episode set in the midst of the vast drama of God's plan. Creation is eternal, for creation is one of the eternal and inseparable attributes of God. All created souls were corporeal, for none but God Himself is without a body, and all originally were pure and equal. But they were free, and thus sin began. Some retained their first estate, or even rose higher, becoming stars or angels of various degrees. Some fell, and are

known as devils. In others the love of God was chilled, but not extinguished; these are 'souls' (derived by a fanciful etymology from ψύχω). These were sent down to earth to be purified through suffering. With them descend certain 'nobler souls', who accept this exile from heaven freely in order to do good to their brethren. Chief among these is the human soul of our Lord, others are souls of prophets and saints or of stars. The world is infinitely various and unequal in order that it may be a fitting place of discipline for all. The good help the imperfect; even the stars play their appointed part in the plan of redemption. The whole creation, disordered and diseased by the fever of moral evil, groaneth and travaileth together, the higher souls agonizing in sympathy with the woes of the lower, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

In these thoughts Origen found a key to the congenital inequalities of mankind. But God's justice orders the future as well as the past, and he could not find peace for his soul until he had added to his reconstruction of the ages before some divination of the ages yet to come, and thus completed his magnificent idea of an eternity marshalled in a stupendous succession of aeons, ordered throughout by one perfect intelligence. If we look back over history, we shall see that God has led His people onwards by three successive revelations: the law of Nature, the law of Moses, and the Gospel. All are real means of grace, each is more perfect than that which went before. But even the Gospel was not absolutely perfect. Above it is the eternal Gospel spoken of by St. John in the Apocalypse.[1] Here at last we shall find that full disclosure of the purposes of God which could not be bestowed in the New Testament because of the nature of human language and the limitations of the flesh-bound mind. The eternal Gospel stands in the same relation to the 'sensible Gospel' as the Church of the First-born to the Church upon earth. It is the ideal Gospel of the ideal Church, in which all shadows and symbols fall away. It is, in fact, the sum total of all revelation, the mystery of

[1] Apoc. xiv. 6.

the King, the secret beauty of the King's daughter, who is all glorious within, a beauty gradually revealing itself to the eye that has received the grace of seeing, not of the letter yet in the letter.

How the Church upon earth appeared to the allegorist will be fairly evident from what has been said. We now pass to the Gospel of the ages to come, to what is called the eschatology of Origen.

Down to this time the whole Church had held that belief which is known as chiliasm or millennarianism. All had looked for a reign of Christ and His saints upon earth for a thousand years between the first resurrection of the just and the general resurrection to judgement. Often this millennium had been described, as by Papias, in very sensual colours. This belief was destroyed by Origen. The time limit could not be reconciled to his mode of thought, and the grossness with which the felicity of the saints was conceived was absolutely repugnant to him. On this point he found universal acceptance among all intelligent Christians.[1]

After death the soul, divested of its earthly garb of flesh, passes into its approved place, or rather condition, of waiting, Hades or Paradise. Even here it is not wholly bodiless: Lazarus is still recognizable. Nor does it lose its knowledge of, nor its sympathy with, the events of earth; the saints still grieve and rejoice with us, and share in our prayers when we pray aright. Even in these intermediate abodes the soul is not dormant nor inactive. The good, taught by angels, follow Jesus through the heavens, ever learning, ever rising; the bad, weighed down by their sins, still haunt earth, as ghosts, apparitions, and so on.

At the end of this aeon comes the Day of Judgement. Here, as always, we are not to be misled by the letter. Scripture, indeed, describes the Great Assize under the figure of an earthly tribunal, with its throne, its awful pageantry, and an interminable procession of prisoners called

[1] Origen speaks of a First and Second Resurrection (*In Ierem. Hom.* ii. 3, Lomm. xv. 133; *Sel. in Psalm.* i, Lomm. xi. 392), but distinguishes them not in time but in quality.

up to the bar. What we know and most surely believe is that Christ will then judge, reading the secrets of all hearts, and assigning to each the due reward, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.'

At the Judgement the dead will be re-joined to their bodies, their own bodies, in which they lived upon earth. Yet not to those very particles of flesh, blood, and bones which made up those bodies. Even in this world the body is like a river; day by day its material substance alters, yet Peter and Paul are still the same, not in soul only, but in person. Every atom is perpetually renewed, yet the thing remains, even scars and freckles endure, while the skin on which they are stamped has no more permanence than running water. There must then be attached to the soul some 'germinative power', similar to that by which a new grain of wheat is evolved out of the death of the old.[1] The soul has a 'spark' or 'principle' by which it lays hold of fitting matter, and shapes it into a habitation suited to its new environment, a body like yet unlike to the former one. The new bodies of the just will be as those of the angels, ethereal and similar to shining light, recognizable, beautiful, yet without those organs that in heaven will be superfluous. Those of the evil will be imperishable, but not glorious. It was thus that Origen interpreted the prophecy of St. Paul.

Scripture told him of a fire that surrounds the presence of God. It is a refining fire burning up every taint of evil, 'wood, hay, stubble.' The whole world must pass through this fire, that all imperfection may be taken away from it, and the new heaven and earth may emerge like the phoenix. All men must pass through it, even Peter and Paul, for none but God is wholly free from sin. But 'sinners like myself' will abide there longer. From this point the just will enjoy eternal bliss, yet the bliss is not perfected at once. There are many 'mansions' to pass through, many degrees of light, before we ascend to the Father of Lights.

[1] *De Princ.* ii. 10. 3; iii. 6.

But the fire is also torment to those for whom torment is needful. It is an invisible fire, for its office is to destroy invisible things. It is of the sinner's own kindling, like a burning fever, whose flames are unsatisfied desire or fierce remorse. At times, especially in his popular sermons, Origen speaks of it as eternal. But when he is not writing for the 'simpler brother', even eternal in this application does not mean everlasting. Like Clement, he cannot believe that the medicinal justice of God will ultimately fail. 'In the end wickedness will be destroyed'[1] and 'God will be all in all'. Whether he believed that even the devil and his angels would ultimately be saved is doubtful.

This doctrine of universal restitution was what later writers have chiefly in view when they speak of Origenism. It differs from the popular belief in purgatory, which is to be found in a vague shape even in Tertullian, in that it admits the possibility of repentance after death, and again in that it is not confined to Christians.

'All these matters,' says Origen, 'which some will deem superfluous and others heretical, we have handled with great fear and caution, discussing and debating rather than affirming and defining';[2] and again, 'God alone knows certainly how things will be, and those who are friends of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.'[3]

[1] *C. Celsum*, viii. 72, Lomm. xx. 218. [2] *De Princ.* i. 6. 1.
[3] *De Princ.* i. 6. 4.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ORIGEN'S CONTEMPORARIES

A CONSIDERABLE number of distinguished men appear in the history of Origen's life. Some of them deserve a special notice.

The first is Sextus Julius Africanus. Born probably between 160 and 170 in Libya, he was so much senior to Origen that he addresses the latter as 'my son'. He lived till about 240. He was a most versatile man who in his time played many parts. He knew so much of the art of war that some have thought that he was at first a military officer, so much about diseases that others have regarded him as a physician or veterinary surgeon. He was a courtier, a huntsman, a mathematician, a botanist, an historian, a chronographer, and a theologian. Probably he accompanied Severus on his campaign against Osrhoene, when he found an opportunity of visiting Mount Ararat. He resided also for some time at Edessa, where he was on terms of close friendship with King Abgar Severus bar Manu, who died about 213, and with his son, the next king. He attended the crown prince on hunting expeditions, and in this way made acquaintance with the famous Bardesanes, whom he judged, with the eyes of an expert, to be the best archer that he had ever seen. At the same time he was ransacking the archives of the city and extracting materials for a history of the Edessan kings. Afterwards he settled down at Emmaus or Nicopolis. From thence he paid a visit to Alexandria, where he heard Heraclas lecture. On another occasion he went to Rome as member of an embassy sent by the Nicopolitans to Alexander Severus. Alexander received him with favour and employed him to install the

new library in the Pantheon.[1] Of his voluminous works[2] we may notice:—

(1) The Letter to Origen,[3] the only one of his writings which has come down to us in its integrity. It was occasioned by the fact that Origen, in one of his public disputations, had quoted the History of Susanna as a part of the Hebrew Canon. Africanus joined issue upon this point, maintaining that the book was from the first Greek, not Hebrew. The letter is a fine and, in its method, quite modern sample of criticism. Yet it must be regarded as a flash of genius. For in the papyrus fragment just quoted we find Africanus, with great but unfounded confidence, insisting upon thrusting back into the text of Homer's *Odyssey* a passage which the heathen grammarians had obelized for sound reasons. At most we may say that he was not unlike Bentley, who, great as a philological and historical critic, made sad havoc with his texts when he employed his desperate hook upon the tender bodies of the poets.

(2) The Letter to Aristides is an attempt to explain the divergences between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. Africanus finds the clue in the Jewish practice of the levirate marriage; the first Gospel he thinks gives the natural, the third the legal pedigree. The argument is ingenious and elaborate, and the theory held its ground down to the revival of learning.

(3) The *Cesti* or Embroideries, a quaint title reminding the reader of *Stromateis*, was a medley of all kinds of information, military, medicinal, and botanical, and abounds in curious recipes for the healing of diseases, not unlike those which are to be found in our old herbals. So superstitious and coarse are they that it has been doubted, but without reason, whether the book was really the work of a Christian.

[1] See the fragment of the Κεστοί, published by Drs. Grenfell and Hunt in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, iii, p. 39. It is a most interesting piece which has set at rest several disputed questions.

[2] The list will be found in *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 507.

[3] See it in Lomm. xvii. 17, or in Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* ii. 225 foll.

(4) But the great work of Africanus was the *Chronica*. Only fragments remain. The idea was to give in outline the whole history of the past, bringing the different lines of tradition into parallelism by means of comparative dates. There had been earlier pioneers in the same field, Tatian, Theophilus, Cassianus (a Gnostic much used by Clement of Alexandria), but the work of Africanus—it was brought down to 221—far surpassed them all in scope and learning. Eusebius was well acquainted with it, and took it as the basis for his own chronological labours. Whether Hippolytus also employed it is a point upon which critics are not agreed.

Edessa,[1] with which Africanus was so familiar, was a place of much importance in the early history of the Church, and indeed of the Empire. It was the capital of the little kingdom of Osrhoene, which lay to the north of the Syrian desert on the frontier dividing Rome and Parthia, and was governed down to 216, when it was incorporated by Caracalla in the Empire, by its own native princes, of whom the majority bore the names either of Abgar or of Manu.

According to ancient Edessan legend the little state was Christianized shortly after the Resurrection. The then Abgar, surnamed Ukkâma or the Black, being afflicted by a sore disease, wrote to Jesus, begging Him to come to Edessa, heal the prince, and enjoy there perfect security against all his enemies. Jesus replied by a letter in which He promised that, as soon as He had ascended, He would send a disciple who should cure Abgar, and teach him and his people the way of life. The letter ended with an assurance that Edessa should be for ever blessed and kept safe against all enemies. As soon as the appointed time arrived, the Apostle Judas, who is also Thomas, sent Thaddaeus, one of the Seventy, by whom all the words of Jesus were fulfilled.

The narrative, as recorded in the *Doctrine of Addai*, is remarkable in many respects. It contains a very singular

[1] Now Urfa. The name according to Prof. Burkitt was originally Urhâi, from which Osrhoene is formed.

form of the legend of the Invention of the Cross, and speaks of a portrait of our Lord, drawn from the life by Hannan, the envoy of Abgar. Such a picture, believed to be miraculous, certainly existed at one time in Edessa, but Eusebius apparently had no knowledge of it, nor was it exhibited to the pilgrim generally called Silvia, though she was an indefatigable sightseer and visited the city. From this portrait sprang the legend of Veronica. Again the letter of Christ to Abgar, owing to the blessing upon Edessa, was used down the early middle ages as a charm for the protection of houses, and even, in Saxon England, of persons, against all manner of harm. So strange and so widely ramified were the superstitions of the fourth century.

As given by Eusebius the story may very possibly be derived from Julius Africanus,[1] but it can only be regarded as an interesting myth. Yet Christianity struck firm root in the neighbourhood of Edessa at a very early date. It is not improbable that Tatian, whose *Diatessaron* remained in use in the Church service for nearly three centuries, was one of the first effectual evangelists, but there appears to have been a colony of Christian Jews in the city even before Tatian's time. About 190 a number of Osrhoenian bishops concurred in writing a letter to Pope Victor on the subject of the Easter controversy,[2] and in 201 'a church of the Christians', which must have been a building of some importance, is mentioned in the Edessene Chronicle as having been destroyed by a great flood. Possibly the Abgar known to Africanus was the first Christian prince. Bardesanes, a poet who is not always devoid of charm and a philosopher who can sometimes be understood, seems to have had a strong party in the early Church of Edessa. His style of teaching, perhaps even his hand, may be discerned in the *Acts of Thomas*, in which will be found a capital romance and a fine mystical poem, tinged with

[1] This, however, is doubtful; see *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 533. The peculiar features found in the *Doctrine of Addai* are not earlier than the fourth century, but these are not related by Eusebius.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* v. 23. 4.

Gnosticism, but a Gnosticism which is neither sour nor aggresive. About 200 the more orthodox section of the community persuaded Serapion of Antioch to consecrate Palut as their bishop, began to look with suspicion upon Tatian's *Diatessaron*, and published a Syriac version of the Four Gospels.[1] Henceforth the Edessene Church approximated more closely to the prevailing type. But even the great Syriac doctors of the fourth century, Aphraates and Ephraem, are by no means shaped after the stereotyped pattern of Western ecclesiastics.

The Church of Edessa is of great interest because of its divergences from the accepted type. It used neither Latin, like Rome and Carthage, nor Greek, like Antioch and Alexandria, but its native Syriac tongue. It was the home of a busy host of translators by whom a vast number of ancient Christian Greek documents were turned into Syriac,[2] and, what is still more to its credit, it was a centre of missionary enterprise towards the east and south-east. The Christians of St. Thomas in India received the Gospel from Edessa, and, after the Council of Ephesus, Nestorian evangelists advanced from this district as far as China.

Some mention has already been made of Gregory, disciple of Origen, afterwards apostle of Pontus.

Gregory, who first bore the name of Theodorus, and his younger brother Athenodorus, were children of wealthy heathen parents who ranked among the nobility of Pontus and dwelt at Neocaesarea, the chief town of the province. The father died when Gregory was fourteen years old. The mother, anxious that her boys should have a career worthy of their birth and station, was not content with the ordinary grammar-school training, but provided them with rhetorical professors. One of these taught Gregory a little Latin and a little Roman law, and strongly advised that he should be sent to Berytus, which was then a famous

[1] The Peschitto arose in Coelesyria in the latter half of the fourth century. Harnack, *Mission*, p. 441. Professor Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 58, would ascribe it to Rabbûla, Bishop of Edessa from 411 to 435. The public use of the *Diatessaron* was prohibited by Rabbûla.

[2] See for a list *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 885.

school of jurisprudence. Shortly afterwards his sister, who was married to a legal assessor of the governor of Palestine, set out from Pontus with a military escort to rejoin her husband at the Palestinian Caesarea, and carried the two boys with her. But at Caesarea Gregory met Origen, and quickly made up his mind to renounce Berytus and the study of the law, and give himself up to religious philosophy under the tuition of the Alexandrine doctor, who struck him from the first as combining 'a sweet charm and persuasiveness with a certain compelling power', and made him feel that 'it is not any way possible to lead a godly life without philosophy'. Gregory remained with Origen for five years, and, when at last he was compelled to return to his native land, pronounced before a crowded audience, including Origen himself, a valedictory panegyric, which, rhetorical as it is, conveys a lively idea of the enthusiasm of the disciple, and of the methods and personal magnetism of the teacher.[1]

Shortly after his return home Origen wrote him a letter,[2] exhorting him to throw the whole of his abilities into the service of Christianity, and study all such Greek wisdom as could be used to adorn and strengthen the Church. Yet he adds the warning that familiarity with pagan science may only make a clever heretic, and so concludes by urging Gregory to be diligent in the study of Scripture. It may be that for some little time Gregory held some legal appointment; if so, he soon resigned it. While still quite young he was ordained by Phaedimus of Amasea as first Bishop of Neocaesarea, his native city. His brother Athenodorus also became bishop of some unnamed see in Pontus.

The ascertainable dates and facts of Gregory's life at Neocaesarea are but few. During the Decian persecution he fled into the mountains with a number of his disciples; those who remained in the city probably all fell away. He witnessed the terrible piratical raids of the Goths and Scythian Borani. These were not unlike the expeditions

[1] Harnack put the date of the panegyric between 240 and 242, *Chron.* ii. 95; Bardenhewer, ii. 274, prefers a somewhat earlier date and would assign it to 238.

[2] In Lomm. xvii. 49.

of the Danes into England, beginning with mere predatory inroads, and developing into regular invasions. They lasted for about twenty years, from 250 to 269, and wrought terrible havoc in Asia Minor.[1] Such catastrophes, in times when both sides are almost equally barbarous, lead naturally to great demoralization, and of this we have an interesting picture in the *Epistola Canonica* attributed to Gregory.[2] Some members of the Church had actually joined the enemy, showing them the way through woods and over mountains, helping them to murder their own countrymen, 'forgetting that they were Pontics and Christians.' Others, again, had remained true to the national cause, but had made a profit out of the disaster, buying captives as slaves, stealing the goods of the slain or of the captives, fraudulently appropriating the spoils left behind by the barbarians on their retreat. A special and most pathetic case is that of women who, having fallen into the hands of the pirates, had lost their chastity.[3] He witnessed also an outbreak of the plague, probably that which occurred in the time of Cyprian and Dionysius, about 252. Gregory was present at the first synod held at Antioch for the trial of Paul of Samosata; probably at the second also, but not at the third.[4] He is said to have died before the end of the reign of Aurelian.

[1] See Mommsen, *Provinces*, i. 242 sqq.

[2] The substance of this document is no doubt historical. It is directed to a 'holy Pope', one of the Pontic bishops to whose diocese the writer had sent Euphrosynus to inquire into the state of things upon the spot. He promises to call a synod, as soon as possible, to decide upon the different kinds of offences and their treatment. The canons, therefore, are merely *ad interim* directions such as those issued by Cyprian. Canon XI, a mere explanation of terms, is no doubt an added gloss. The document is interesting for the history of penitential discipline. It speaks of two classes of penitents, the ἀκροώμενοι and the ὑποπίπτοντες, both words for the first time used in this sense. They recur in the ante-Nicene canons of Ancyra and Neocaesarea, and probably originated in the Church of Gregory. See Routh, iii. 256.

[3] Some of these, Gregory observes, were women of notoriously bad character, yet members of the Church.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 28. At the third synod there was a Theodorus, Eus. *H. E.* vii. 30, a name formerly borne by Gregory, but not used by him from some time before he became bishop. He is addressed as Gregory in Origen's letter to him.

Scholar as he was, Gregory left but a handful of writings behind him. He would seem to have devoted himself with great singleness of heart to the pastoral care of his diocese, in which he is said to have found but seventeen Christians and left but seventeen heathen. The character impressed by him upon the Church of Neocaesarea remained unaltered in the time of St. Basil, though it had then come to be regarded as old-fashioned. His Creed reflects the doctrine of the Trinity as he had learned it from Origen, though his doxology was not Origen's, but that defended by Basil himself. The same Basil tells us that Gregory in his *Dialogue with Aelianus* used a phrase which implied Sabellianism, and certain other phrases which were afterwards regarded as distinctly Sabellian or Arian.[1] Sabellianism would be a strange opinion to be held by a pupil of Origen, and seems to be quite excluded by the Gregorian Creed. As to Arianism, very similar expressions were employed by Dionysius of Alexandria, as we shall presently see, and by other ante-Nicene writers.

Gregory had many legitimate titles to high consideration, but they were all swallowed up in the mist of the supernatural powers to which he owes his epithet of Thaumaturgus. St. Basil tells us that he changed the course of the river Lycus, dried up a lake which was an object of dispute between two brothers, and foretold the future as clearly as any of the prophets.[2] The panegyric of Gregory of Nyssa is little more than a string of miracles, and includes the strange story how the saint once, when upon a journey, slept in a roadside temple, how the gods there worshipped immediately forsook their oracles, and durst not return until a bit of parchment, on which he had written with his own hand 'Gregory to Satan. Come in', was laid upon the altar. These preposterous tales were not invented by Basil or his brother. They had heard them in their old home at Neocaesarea from their grandmother, Macrina, and from the peasants of the country-side. They represent the passionate

[1] *Ep.* 210. 5 *πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἐπινοίᾳ μὲν εἶναι δύο, ὑποστάσει δὲ ἕν*: again, *ποίημα* and *κτίσμα* were used of the Son.

[2] Basil, *De S. Sp.* 74.

love of a wild, half-heathen, suffering, and credulous race for one who had given up all—rank, wealth, and even learning—to live among them and be their father in God. The same fate befel Gregory as Martin of Tours, Felix of Nola, Januarius of Naples, and many others. A childlike, indeed childish, population clung to them with an affection far too deep for criticism, and could believe anything about them if it was only wonderful enough. Gregory's real miracle was the evangelization of Pontus,[1] or, to be more precise, we should perhaps say of Pontus to the east of the Lycus. There were Christian communities in Pontus even at the date of the First Epistle of St. Peter. Pliny does not inform us in what part of his province he found the very numerous Christians mentioned in his dispatch to Trajan. In the time of Marcus Aurelius there were many Churches in Paphlagonia and Pontus who looked up to Palmas of Amastris as their primate by right of seniority.[2] The charlatan Alexander found his native land, Paphlagonia, full of Christians.[3] Hippolytus[4] speaks of a bishop in Pontus who believed that the Last Day was at hand, and persuaded many of his people to flee with him from home. Sinope, in Paphlagonia, had a fully organized Church early in the second century; Marcion was son of the bishop of that town. Gregory was appointed by Phaedimus of Amasea as missionary bishop to Neocaesarea; the place seems to have been at the time almost wholly heathen; there can hardly have been even the twelve Christian householders required by the ancient canon,[5] and there was no church till Gregory built one. Gregory established a new bishopric at Comana.[6]

[1] It may be observed that in Pontus Gregory Thaumaturgus followed the same plan that Gregory the Great recommended to Augustine of Canterbury, a plan that had been used by Paulinus of Nola. He collected the bodies of the martyrs who perished in the Decian persecution, and in their honour established church-wakes, to compensate his converts for the loss of the festive meetings which used to be held at the pagan temples.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 23. 6; v. 23. 3. [3] Lucian, *Alexander*, 25. 38.

[4] *Comm. on Daniel*, p. 232.

[5] Kanones Apost. in Pitra, *Iur. Eccl. Mon.* p. 82.

[6] The account given by Gregory Nyssene of his appointment of Alexander, a charcoal burner, to Comana seems to imply that Alexander was the first bishop.

By the time of the Nicene Council Christianity had advanced eastward and northward along the shore of the Euxine beyond Trapezus as far as Pityus.[1]

Another great centre of the propaganda was the Cappadocian Caesarea, formerly called Mazaca. Here Firmilian, correspondent of Cyprian, friend of Origen, was bishop as early as 232. From Caesarea mainly, partly also from Edessa, the Church had made its way into Lesser and Greater Armenia and Melitene. In the last-named district Christians were numerous in the time of Diocletian,[2] and even in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, if there is any historical foundation for the old legend of the *Legio Fulminatrix*. The story also of Polyeuctes, the Melitenian soldier-martyr, who is said to have been beheaded in the time of Decius or Valerian, is regarded as in substance true.[3] Among the epistles of Dionysius of Alexandria on the penance dispute which arose out of the Decian persecution, one was addressed to Meruzanes, bishop, probably, of Sebaste in Lower Armenia.[4] From the same district comes that most interesting document, the *Testament of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*,[5] who perished in the persecution of Licinius, and, though they belonged to many different places, desired to be laid to rest all together 'by the city of Zela in the district of Sarin'. But next to the conversion of Edessa the chief triumph of the Eastern missionaries was that of Greater Armenia, which was consummated by the beginning of the fourth century, when it became a Christian kingdom, Tiridates having been won over by the famous Gregory the Illuminator, who had himself learned Christianity at Caesarea.

Another eminent Cappadocian was Alexander, pupil, friend, and patron of Origen, bishop of some unknown see in the province, and confessor under Septimius Severus. He remained in confinement several years, and from his prison wrote that letter to Antioch which was carried to

[1] Harnack, *Mission*, 473–7.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* viii. 6.

[3] See Harnack, *Mission*, p. 471; Conybeare, *Monuments of Early Christianity*, p. 123 sqq.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 46. 2.

[5] See Gebhardt, *Acta Martyrum Selecta*, p. 166.

its destination by Clement of Alexandria. Probably his release was accompanied by a sentence of banishment, for in 212 or 213 he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was there seized upon by the Church and made bishop, at first as coadjutor to the aged Narcissus. He founded a library in Jerusalem, which under him began to lift up its head among the Churches, and recover from the disastrous effects of its treatment by Hadrian. Alexander died in prison during the persecution of Decius in 250.

Narcissus, his predecessor and colleague, was almost as famous as Thaumaturgus for his miracles. Eusebius had seen, among the treasures of the sacristy at Jerusalem, a little phial. It was preserved as a memorial of the wonders wrought by Narcissus. One Easter the lamps in the church went out, and there was nothing to replenish them with; the bishop ordered the deacons to bring water, prayed over it, and the water became oil.[1]

It is a striking fact that, while the persecutions of the second century led to a great outburst of prophetism, those of the third were followed by a rapid growth of credulity. We may note the fact in the strange narrative about Natalius the Confessor,[2] in Cyprian,[3] in Novatian,[4] in Dionysius of Alexandria,[5] and in the popular beliefs about Gregory Thaumaturgus and Narcissus.

It may be added that Narcissus was the first anchoret. Disgusted by false charges which had been laid against him, though they were miraculously avenged, he became weary of his office, and fled into the desert to lead 'the philosophic life'. So closely and so long did he lie hid that three bishops in succession were appointed in his place. At last he emerged from his concealment and resumed his office. But he was already in extreme old age, and, in obedience to a vision, Alexander was seized upon, as has already been said, and forced to act as his coadjutor with right of succession. The two are said to have ruled the Church of Jerusalem conjointly for years, till Narcissus

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 9.
[2] Eus. *H. E.* v. 28. 8.
[3] See the stories which he tells in *De Lapsis*, 25, 26.
[4] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 18.
[5] Eus. *H. E.* vi. 44.

died at the age of 116. The story is remarkable as affording the first instance of the translation of a bishop, and of the existence of two bishops in the same see at the same time.

The successors of Demetrius in the see of Alexandria down to the end of the century were Heraclas, Dionysius, Maximus, Theonas, and Peter.[1] The most eminent of these was Dionysius. Like Cyprian, he had been converted from heathenism, was rich, of good family, and highly esteemed by the secular authorities.[2] Like Cyprian, again, he had ill-wishers in his own Church, who blamed him severely for his flight in the persecution, especially one Germanus, a confessor of some note. Here, however, the resemblance ceases. Dionysius was a man not of the rhetorical but of the philosophical type, a scholar and a champion of the rights of scholars. Some of his clergy blamed him for his familiarity with unorthodox literature. To the 'simpler brethren' of Alexandria it seemed impossible thus to touch pitch without being defiled. But he answered confidently that the Divine Voice had ordered him to read any book that fell into his hands, because he was able to test and judge, and because wide and open-minded study had been, in fact, the means by which he had been brought into the Church. Thus he held himself to be fulfilling the 'apostolic voice' which commanded all that are capable of receiving the precept to 'become experienced money-changers'.[3]

He succeeded Heraclas as master of the Catechetical School, and retained the office even after he became bishop. Of his sufferings in the persecution, and his services in the plague, mention has already been made. He excused himself on the ground of weakness and old age from attending the first of the Antiochene synods for the trial of Paul of Samosata,[4] but sent a letter declaring his views on the matter in debate, and shortly afterwards died in 264–5.

Dionysius was a copious and highly influential writer. He was in active correspondence with Rome and many

[1] Harnack, *Chron.* i. 205. [2] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 11. 18.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 7. On this saying, anciently and very widely attributed to our Lord, see Resch, *Agrapha*, pp. 116, 233.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 27.

Churches in the East, even with the Armenians, not to speak of letters to the bishops of his own diocese and his annual Easter missives. He deals with all the burning questions of his time, Novatianism and the ensuing penance disputes, rebaptism and Sabellianism. Always he expresses himself with learning, candour, moderation, and always his style is marked by a strong personal note, affectionate yet gently urgent. Of his capacity as an interpreter of Scripture we have one excellent instance in his criticism of the Apocalypse. It comes from his work against Nepos, whom he praises for his knowledge of Scripture, for his diligence, and for the hymns which he had composed. But Nepos was a determined opponent of the allegorists and a strong upholder of chiliasm, and this leads Dionysius to deliver his opinion upon the Apocalypse. He held, on the intrinsic evidence of Greek style, of characteristic phrases, figures, and so forth, that, while the Gospel and the First Epistle were the work of John the Apostle, the Apocalypse must have been written by a different hand, and suggests that its author may have been John Mark, or that second John of Ephesus who is commonly called John the Presbyter.[1] Both the criticism itself, and the way in which the criticism leads up to a hypothetical solution of a rather venturesome kind, bear a strong resemblance to much excellent modern work in the same fields. Another good instance of a different type occurs in the Epistle to Basilides,[2] where he treats of the hour at which our Saviour rose from the dead, compares the variations in the Evangelic records, and shrinks from a decision.[3]

In 260 or 261 Dionysius was drawn into an animated correspondence with his namesake Dionysius, the then Bishop of Rome. Sabellianism was still maintained in the Pentapolis of Libya, its original home, and the Alexandrian Pope had sent epistles on the subject to bishops in that

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 25. [2] In Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* iii. 223.

[3] In this epistle he gives an interesting account of the Lenten Fast as then observed at Alexandria. It lasted six days. Some abstained from food altogether for the whole week, some for two or three or four days. Some did not fast rigorously, or indeed at all, upon any day. See the statement of Irenaeus upon the same subject above, pp. 191, 213.

region. In one of these addressed to Ammonius and Euphranor he had dwelt upon the passages of Scripture by which the personal difference between the Father and the Son was generally held to be proved,[1] and pointed out that there is a sense in which Jesus is 'foreign to the substance of God'. Some of his clergy took alarm at his expressions, went to Rome and charged him with denying the *homoousion*, which in that city was already regarded as the test word of orthodoxy. Letters passed between the two bishops, and finally Dionysius of Alexandria addressed to his namesake a considerable treatise in four books, entitled 'Confutation and Defence',[2] in which he asserted confidently, and apparently with perfect justice, that though he had not used the word *homoousios*, because he could not find it in Scripture, he held and had given full expression to the idea.[3] His theology was, in fact, that of Origen, or that of the Fathers of the Antiochene Council of the Dedication in 341.

But after the Council of Nicaea it was regarded as highly dangerous and improper to use language which in the third century had passed as orthodox. The Arians sheltered themselves under the great name of Dionysius. Basil charges him with having been the first who sowed the seed of Anomoeanism, and with having at one time affirmed, at another denied, the consubstantiality of the Persons.[3] Whether Basil was a good witness is not clear. The writings of Dionysius had been sent to him, and he had no doubt looked into them, but he does not say that he had read them closely, and he had not thought it worth while to keep them in his library. Jerome admits Dionysius, without a word of adverse comment, into the roll of illustrious writers;[4] Gennadius calls him *fons Arii*.[5] Athanasius, who was much less bound by formulas than his contemporaries or successors, calls Dionysius 'a doctor

[1] Especially John xv. 1 'I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman'; Proverbs viii. 22 ἔκτισε: Heb. i. 4 κρείττων γενόμενος: iii. 2 ποιήσαντι αὐτόν.

[2] Ἔλεγχος καὶ Ἀπολογία

[3] *Ep.* 9. 2. [4] *De Vir. Ill.* 69. [5] *De Eccles. Dogm.* 4.

of the Catholic Church',[1] and produces ample evidence to show that on the article of consubstantiality the opinion of Dionysius was the same as his own. Of the suspicious phrases from the incriminated epistle he says that they were correctly used by Dionysius of the Word as Incarnate, and this is probably a sufficient explanation. It is true that we have no knowledge of the epistle beyond what we owe to Athanasius, but theology which satisfied that keen judge cannot be lightly called in question.

The incident is chiefly interesting as showing that the word *homoousios* found its way into the Nicene Creed from the West, and especially from Rome.

[1] *De Sententia Dionysii*, 6, *Opp.* ed. Ben., vol. i, p. 247.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

Next after Alexandria Antioch was the chief city of the East.

Founded by the Macedonian Seleucids, it was the capital of their extensive realm and the centre from which Hellenic influence radiated towards the East and South East.[1] The victory of L. Scipio over Antiochus the Great fell in 190 B.C., and Syria finally became a Roman province in 64 B.C., as a consequence of the defeat of Mithridates and Tigranes by Pompey.

Under the Empire Antioch became a place of great strategic importance as the base of operations, offensive or defensive, first against Parthia, afterwards against Persia. Syria was one of the imperial provinces, and the legate was in command of an army of four legions, powerful in numbers but always weak in military spirit and discipline. Antioch was the head quarters of the Emperor himself whenever there was serious war in the East, of Vespasian, of Trajan, of Lucius Verus, of Julian.

But its permanent importance lay in its wealth. As Alexandria, lying at the head of the Red Sea, commanded all the maritime traffic with the far East, so Antioch was the natural emporium of all the merchandise that came up the Euphrates, or was brought by caravan across the desert from Ctesiphon through Palmyra, or even from China by way of the Caspian Sea,[2] by which would come the raw silk

[1] Seleucus I had sent Megasthenes on an embassy to King Chandragupta, whose name is famous in the history of Buddhism; see Copleston, *Buddhism*, p. 305; T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 220, and for the diffusion of Hellenic influences in the direction of India, Lassen, *Zur Geschichte der Griechischen und Indoskythischen Könige in Baktrien, Kabul und Indien.*

[2] The Caspian was described in the time of Seleucus I and Antiochus I by Patrocles. Whether Patrocles had personally explored it is doubtful, for he seems to have regarded it as an inlet of the Indian Ocean. See Strabo, xi. 6.

to be woven and dyed at Berytus or Tyre. Syria had also much internal wealth of its own. The country, especially the valley of the Orontes, was, in the days before the Mohammedan conquest, immensely fertile. Glass was manufactured at Sidon, purple came from Tyre, the art of weaving flax had been introduced from Babylon, and fine linen was one of the chief exports of the province. Thus a great volume of trade passed through Seleucia, the port of Antioch, into all the West, and Syrian merchants had their factories wherever business was active, in Italy, Dalmatia, Dacia, Spain, but, above all, in Gaul and the Germanies.

Hence Antioch was prosperous and beautiful. It was built in four walled quarters surrounded and held together by a common ring of fortifications. Its public edifices were unsurpassed in magnificence. One of the glories of the city was its main street, more than four miles long. But in two points it was quite unrivalled, in the abundance and excellence of its water-supply, and in the lighting of its streets by night.

It was a Greek-speaking city, but the character of the population remained essentially Syrian. They made no contribution to serious literature or science, but some of the epigrammatists of the anthology, Meleager, Philodamus of Gadara, Antipater of Sidon, were Syrians. Lucian, witty, sceptical, and trifling, came from Commagene. In the middle of the second century we hear of one Iamblichus, the earliest of the novelists, to whom Photius devotes several pages;[1] in the middle of the third, of Porphyry the Neoplatonist and opponent of Christianity, a serious-minded but wildly superstitious man. Antioch was regarded by the Romans as the most dissolute of the great cities. Thence came jockeys, dancers, musicians, jugglers, buffoons. Juvenal complains that they were worse than the Greeks. The park of Daphne—it lay about five miles from the city in the beautiful valley of the Orontes—was famous for its cypresses, its cascades, its temple of Apollo, and the vices

[1] *Cod.* 94.

of its frequenters; *Daphnici mores* was a proverb.[1] Above all the Antiochenes were notorious for their mordant and unbridled gutter wit, for nicknames, lampoons, and obscene ribaldry, in which they excelled even the Alexandrians. They spared not even Emperors when a chance offered itself. Julian the Apostate smarted under their venomous and unruly tongues, and avenged himself by drawing their portrait in his *Misopogon*. It was by their gibing tongues that the nickname 'Christian', which noted the Church at once as an army and a factious army, had been coined. In the time of Julian they invented for his annoyance another byword of the streets: 'Neither the Chi nor the Kappa (neither Christ nor Constantine) had done the city any harm.'

In pre-Christian history Antioch had been the centre from which Antiochus Epiphanes had essayed the Hellenization of Palestine, thus exciting the wars of the Maccabees and the great outburst of exclusive Jewish sentiment which followed. Under the Roman Emperors Jews were very numerous in Asia Minor and especially in Antioch, where from the time of Seleucus I they had enjoyed the full rights of citizenship, which they were allowed to retain in spite of the animosity of their Gentile fellow townsmen. They had many synagogues in the city; one of these was particularly splendid, and possessed among its treasures many vessels of brass which had been carried off by Antiochus Epiphanes from the Temple at Jerusalem and presented to this Jewish place of worship by one of his successors. From hence they carried on a liberal and successful propaganda. Large numbers of Greeks attended the services, observed more or less of the Law without receiving circumcision, and were regarded as allies, if not exactly as members, of the Jewish community.[2]

It was through these liberal Jews of the Diaspora and the 'God-fearing' Greeks belonging to their circle that Christianity obtained a secure footing in Antioch. In the Acts we find two Churches there, one Jewish, one Gentile,

[1] See the description of this haunt of pleasure in Gibbon, chap. xxiii.

[2] See Schürer, *Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, Bd. iii, § 31.

existing side by side. But under the influence of Paul and of Barnabas they soon joined hands, and Antioch became the first great centre of Christian mission work and the cradle of Gentile Christianity.

The episcopal list of Antioch includes somewhat more than the usual proportion of distinguished men. The first Euodius is unknown, but the second is Ignatius the Apostolic Father and martyr. Of the third, fourth, and fifth, Hero, Cornelius, Eros, only the names are on record. The sixth, Theophilus, is considerable among the apologists. The seventh, Maximinus, again, has no history. The eighth, Serapion,[1] was a writer and a pillar of orthodoxy; he suppressed the apocryphal and docetist Gospel of Peter which he had found in use at Rhossus, and he consecrated Palut, perhaps the first Catholic Bishop of Edessa. The next three, Asclepiades, Philetus, Zebinus, do not emerge; but Babylas was a famous saint and martyr, who is said to have imposed penance on the Emperor Philip, perished in the Decian persecution, and, long after his death, plays a striking part in the discomfiture of Julian of Antioch. Fabius, his successor, was at one time inclined to favour Novatianism. Domitianus again is a name, but the next bishop, standing fifteenth on the list, was the notorious Paul of Samosata, who was consecrated in 260, deposed about 268, and finally expelled by Aurelian in 272.[2]

The episcopate of Paul corresponds in point of time with the suzerainty of the Palmyrene princes over Antioch. In the horrid series of calamities which marked the reign of Gallienus this Arab dynasty had risen to great power. In the wild confusion that ensued after the capture of Valerian by Shahpur in 260, Odaenathus of Palmyra threw in his lot with Gallienus, drove Shahpur back into his own country, and aided powerfully in the overthrow of Macrianus, the most powerful of the so-called Thirty Tyrants. For these services he assumed the title of King, which Gallienus was compelled to recognize.[3] After this he turned his army against the Gothic invaders of Asia Minor. He

[1] He became bishop in 190.

[2] For these dates see Harnack, *Chron.* i, p. 218.

[3] Schiller, p. 837.

would eventually have made himself independent ruler of all the provinces of the East, but his strenuous life ended in 266 or 267, when he was murdered, with his eldest son Herodes, by a treacherous kinsman. His work was taken up by his wife Zenobia, a woman of extraordinary capacity and resolution. She spoke fluently Greek and Latin as well as her native Syriac, read Homer and Plato, debated philosophy with Longinus and theology with Paul of Samosata, and was in addition an accomplished hunter and warrior. She bore the title of Queen, did not shrink from armed resistance to Gallienus, and made her son Wahballath titular king in Egypt.[1] Such a state of things could not be satisfactory to the great soldier Emperors Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian, who succeeded Gallienus, but they were compelled to tolerate what could not for the time be remedied. At length Aurelian found himself equal to the task of bringing back Palmyra to its former position. His general Probus, afterwards Emperor, seized Egypt, and Aurelian, marching down from the Hellespont and clearing the Goths out of Asia on the way, drove the Palmyrenes before him, delivered battle to Zenobia before the gates of Antioch, captured the city, and finally succeeded in reaching Palmyra, which, after a long siege, fell into his hands. Zenobia herself was treated with consideration, but her councillors, including the eminent Longinus, were put to death, and Palmyra became an ordinary provincial city. Immediately after the withdrawal of the Roman army it revolted, was again besieged and captured, and this time felt the whole severity of the Roman laws of war.[2] The city never recovered from this frightful blow. Zenobia was carried to Rome to adorn the triumph of Aurelian. Some said that she met the usual fate of captive princes who had figured in these pomps. But there was a story that she and her two youngest sons were spared, that Aurelian gave her a villa at Tibur, and that the descendants of her sons were still living at Rome in wealth and dignity

[1] Schiller, p. 857 sqq.

[2] Waddington places the first capture of Palmyra in spring 272, the second in spring 273; see Schiller, p. 864.

at the time when Trebellius Pollio wrote his account of the Thirty Tyrants.

It is possible that Paul owed his bishopric to the influence of Odaenathus. To him also he probably owed his office of Ducenarius.[1] Athanasius tells us[2] that he enjoyed the patronage of Zenobia also. Certainly he held the see of Antioch at a time of great political excitement and disorder; and, as he belonged to the Palmyrene faction, he must have been regarded with great bitterness by those who fretted under the rule of an Oriental potentate and had remained faithful through all trials to the legitimate Roman Emperor.

It is possible that Paul's doctrine and manner of life had excited great suspicion and dislike from the first. If we may take the *Letter of the Six Bishops*[3] as marking the initial stage, it would appear that these prelates had visited Paul to satisfy their doubts of his orthodoxy, that after they had left him they wrote to him a conjoint letter, setting out their belief as to the Father and the Son and calling upon him to say whether he would subscribe to this *Regula Fidei* or not. It is probable that Paul refused this test. After this there must have been considerable delay. Paul's position was exceedingly strong. He was the incumbent of the chief see between the Hellespont and Egypt; he had a strong body of supporters among the Antiochene clergy and laity; he was upheld by the Palmyrene suzerain; the point which he had raised was entirely new, and there was no clear precedent for the deposition of a bishop except by the Church of his own diocese. At last it was decided, we know not on whose initiative, to call together a great synod, including bishops,

[1] There were several officials, both military and civil, who bore this title. As applied to Paul it probably means Procurator ducenarius, a high fiscal official so called because he received a stipend of 200,000 sesterces, about £2,000.

[2] *Hist. Ar.* 71.

[3] In Routh, iii. 289. They were Hymenaeus of Jerusalem, Theotecnus of Caesarea, Maximus of Bostra, Theophilus, Proclus, and Bolanus; the sees of the last three are unknown. The genuineness of the *Letter* has been disputed, but see *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 525.

priests, deacons, and apparently even laity of the neighbouring cities and nations, with a certain number of bishops from the more distant sees including Dionysius of Alexandria, Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory Thaumaturgus and his brother Athenodorus from Pontus, Helenus of Tarsus, Niconas of Iconium, Maximus of Bostra, with Hymenaeus of Jerusalem and Theotecnus of Palestinian Caesarea. The number of those summoned must have been large, but we have no authoritative statement as to the actual attendance.

No less than three synods were held within the space of about five years. Dionysius of Alexandria would have been the natural chairman, but he was too old and broken to assist, though he wrote a letter to the Church of Antioch condemning Paul, whose defence he had not heard. In his absence Firmilian presided over the first and second synods. Firmilian died on the way to the third, still hoping that the Church might be spared the scandal of a bishop deposed for heresy, and Helenus of Tarsus took his place. The final synod was a small one. Sixteen signed the synodical letter, and not all of these were bishops.[1] Malchion, a converted rhetorician, a Christian priest, and master of the Catechetical School of Antioch, a keen and bitter controversialist, was entrusted with the difficult task of bringing Paul to the point. The proceedings took the form of a dialogue between the accuser and the accused; it was taken down by shorthand writers and remained in libraries as late as the sixth century.[2] Malchion was also the composer of the synodical letter directed to Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria.

The letter begins with a lively attack upon Paul's conduct in his double capacity of Ducenarius and of bishop. As Ducenarius, a strange position for a Christian prelate, he is charged with amassing a great fortune by abuse of his powers, with accepting bribes and levying blackmail even upon the brethren. Further he is said to have displayed intolerable arrogance on the strength of his secular dignity, swaggering about in the market-places of the city with a

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 30.

[2] *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 521.

military escort, reading and dictating his letters as he went along. As bishop his vanity and pride appeared in a still more odious light. In the church he had a *secretum*, or withdrawing room, shut off with lattice-work and screened with curtains, just like that of a heathen judge. He had also a lofty throne and a high and roomy pulpit in which he ranged to and fro, stamping his feet, slapping his thigh, keeping a keen watch upon the audience to note whether they waved their handkerchiefs and shouted applause, speaking of his esteemed predecessors with contempt, employing, in fact, all the arts of the vulgar heathen declaimer. He prohibited the singing of hymns to Christ on the ground that they were modern inventions, and on Easter Day caused a choir of women to sing hymns to himself, as an angel sent down from heaven for the enlightenment of the Church. He kept about him a band of female devotees in his house and elsewhere, and encouraged others of the clergy to do the same, and thus by screening immorality and by bribery had drawn over the country bishops to his party.

Whatever allowance may be made for the rancour and rhetorical nature of this attack it will be clear that Paul was a most unusual figure among bishops, and a very unfit person for the office, fanatical, worldly, and political. What he taught is not so clear. In the *Synodical Letter* Malchion charges him with maintaining the heresy of Artemon, and Eusebius says[1] that he made Christ a common man. This, however, is only partially correct. If we turn to the fragments collected by Routh, which are drawn partly from the dialogue with Malchion before the third synod, partly from Paul's own writings, we gather a better and more accurate view. The new heresy of Paul was not Trinitarian but Christological; it concerned the union of the Two Natures in the Saviour, and may be called the first rough draft of Nestorianism. The question had never yet been accurately discussed in the Church.

As to the personal pre-existence of the divine Logos the view of Paul appears to have been quite orthodox.[2] But

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 27.

[2] Fragment in Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* p. 300.

from the Logos he distinguished sharply Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ, as all names of the Man. 'The Word is from above, Jesus Christ is a Man from this world.' 'The Man is anointed,' is Christ, 'the Word is not anointed.'[1] Hence Paul agreed with Nestorius, in insisting that Mary was not the mother of the Logos, though she received Him in her womb. But what she can truly be said to have borne was a Man like ourselves.[2]

Thus the Word and Jesus were united at the miraculous conception. But in what precise way united? By conjunction of the Two Persons.[3] It was a union of will, love, and sinlessness, the only way in which two different Natures, two different Persons, can be united. Further, it is only by this kind of union that the goodness of the Man becomes adorable. 'Things which are bound together by the power of nature have no praise, but those which are bound together by the relation of love are highly praised.'[4] Here Paul means that if the Two Natures are conceived of as hypostatically united, the Humanity, having no existence of its own, can have no virtues of its own.

The conjunction of the Two Natures, or rather Persons, is regarded as always perfect in sinlessness, but as growing with the growing receptivity of the Man until finally Jesus 'inherits the Name which is above every name as a prize of love'.[5]

Other phrases used by Paul are that the Word 'dwelt in' Jesus, 'not essentially, but by way of quality,' that the Word was, as it were, 'the inner man' of Jesus, that the Word dwelt in Him 'as in none other', but in far higher degree.[6] Such language helps to demonstrate the substantial identity of the Christology of Paul with that of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius, and explains why Paul was charged with making the Saviour 'a mere man', or with teaching 'two Sons'. There is a sense in which these charges are true, a sense in which they are not. It is true that he taught two personalities in the one Son.

[1] Routh, *l. c.* p. 326. [2] Routh, p. 327.
[3] *συνήφθη*, Routh, p. 329, the very word used afterwards by Nestorius.
[4] Routh, ib. [5] Routh, p. 329. [6] Routh, p. 311.

In the course of these debates the word *homoousion* had somehow been brought into discredit. We have seen that the word was already current in Rome and the West, while in the East Dionysius of Alexandria avoided though he did not reject it, thinking that the idea was better expressed in Scriptural terms. The Fathers of Antioch agreed with him in this, regarding *homoousion* as a word so far from clear that it lent itself easily to great confusion and errors. But by whom the term was introduced into the debate, or in what precise reference, is not clear.

Athanasius tells us that in a certain Letter,[1] which he did not possess at the time of writing, Paul himself had employed the word to point a dilemma. 'If,' said Paul, 'Christ was not a man who became God, He must have been originally *homoousion* with God, and there must then be three *ousiai* or essences, one archetypal and two derived.' In Paul's mouth this could only mean that the Father, the divine Logos, and the Man Christ would all be of the same nature. On his own view, which separated the personalities in the Redeemer, this would be a plausible retort, and it may have led the synod to think that a phrase so ambiguous would be best avoided.

But according to Basil[2] it was the Fathers themselves who mooted and finally rejected the term as improper for their own purpose. *Homoousion*, they said, expressed the relation of the generic conception to the different individuals denoted thereby, for instance of Man to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and so implied division and all such inequalities as are found in existing men. This is in fact the sense put upon the word by Basil himself, which led him for many years to prefer the *homoiousian* theory. The account which he gives of the incident is clearer and probably more accurate than that of Athanasius, whose memory of what he had read was perhaps not very recent.

But Hilary[3] and Epiphanius[4] declare that Paul accepted the *homoousion*, though in a Sabellian sense. But Paul

[1] The *Debate with Malchion*, or the *Synodical Letter*?
[2] *Ep.* 52. 1.
[3] *De Syn.* 81, 86, 88.
[4] *Haer.* 65. 8.

would certainly not have admitted the phrase as regards the human personality of the Redeemer, and the issue of Sabellianism was not before the Council.

Finally the Council condemned, excommunicated, and deposed Paul, and appointed in his place Domnus, son of Demetrianus, the previous bishop. This, though it might be excused by the plea of necessity, was an invasion of the rights of the Church of Antioch, and Paul was strong enough to resist the execution of the mandate for two years. But the fall of Zenobia deprived him of his chief protector. His judges then ventured upon the audacious step of appealing to the victorious Emperor; it was the first occasion on which the Church invoked the secular arm, and Aurelian probably was not sorry to seize the chance of striking down the last supporter of the Palmyrene cause. He drove Paul out of the cathedral, and ordered that the edifice should be surrendered to the person who should be named by the Bishops of Rome and Italy.

Here we find the third act of imperial recognition. Alexander Severus had bestowed upon the Church the right of holding land. Gallienus had confirmed this privilege by restoring the buildings and cemeteries which had been confiscated by Valerian. Aurelian not merely repeated the confirmation, but added in effect that the Church was a great corporation with laws of its own, and that these laws ought, upon reasonable occasions, to be enforced by the imperial power. Notwithstanding this act of grace it is said that Aurelian afterwards formed the design of instituting a new persecution. But his purpose, if he had really conceived it, was frustrated by his own murder, and the Church was not again molested till Diocletian issued his edict.

It may perhaps be charitably doubted whether Paul of Samosata was as worthless as Malchion describes him. If the point which he raised was indeed the same as that subsequently advocated by Nestorius, some allowance ought to be made for its novelty and its extraordinary difficulty. At any rate we may see in him the first of a line of teachers who gave to the Antiochene School its distinguishing

quality, that of zeal for our Lord's Humanity. This is the common feature of Lucian, of Diodorus of Tarsus, of Theodorus of Mopsuestia, of Chrysostom, of Nestorius, of John of Antioch, of Theodoret, and of Ibas. Probably no one in modern England would speak of the Assyrian Christians as detestable heretics, and few would undertake to explain the difference between a perfect Human Nature and a Human Personality.

CHAPTER XXXVI

DIOCLETIAN

The reign of Gallienus marks the lowest ebb in the fortunes of the empire before the fatal collapse of the West in the fifth century. He was succeeded by a number of good and capable rulers—Claudius, Aurelius, Tacitus, Probus, Carus, all except Tacitus excellent soldiers, chosen by the army for their military competence, all except Claudius murdered by the army after brief reigns. By these men the barbarians of the North had been, at any rate for a time, repulsed, the encroachments of the Persians had been barred, the establishment of separate local empires in Gaul and in the East had been prevented, and the frontiers restored, though not wholly, for Dacia beyond the Danube and the district known as the *Decumates Agri* beyond the Rhine had been permanently abandoned. But it had become evident that there could be no real security without great changes. The discipline of the army must be corrected, the whole organization of the State must be overhauled and improved, and some better safeguards must be devised for the life of the Emperor himself. All this was attempted and in great measure effected by Diocletian.

Carus had been murdered by his own officers in December, 283, in the midst of his victorious invasion of Persia. Numerianus, his son, at once ordered the troops to march homewards. When the shores of the Bosphorus were at last reached, it was discovered that Numerianus was lying dead in his tent. The whole army assembled in the camp. Diocletian loudly protested his own innocence, accused Arrius Aper, the praetorian prefect and acting commander-in-chief, of the murder of his master, and immediately plunged his sword into the unhappy man's body. Whether he was carried away by natural indignation, or whether he

took this way of silencing his own accomplice, can never be known with certainty. But he was himself captain of the emperor's body-guard, and bore chief responsibility for the personal safety of the emperor. If there was a plot against the life of Carus or of Numerianus, he can hardly have been ignorant of the fact. It was certainly he who reaped the fruit of both crimes; for he was at once acclaimed Augustus by the troops and officers, on the 17th of November, 284.[1] Within a year Carinus, the elder and surviving son of Carus, who had been left by his father in charge of the empire in Europe, was killed by his own troops, on the battlefield of Margus, when he was on the very point of gaining the victory. Thus Diocletian was left without a rival.

He was born in Dalmatia, in circumstances so obscure that we do not really know who or what his father was. But, down to the time of his accession, he bore the name of Diocles, which seems to mark him as of servile origin. After he became Emperor he expanded and romanized Diocles into Diocletianus. His forename was Gaius; his other names, Aurelius Valerius, if not deliberately assumed, may have been bestowed by some noble Roman by whom he or his father had been enfranchised. He rose through the army, and when he first appears on the scene had risen by his own merits to be commander of the body-guard, a high military position, though by no means the highest. On his rough way through life he had managed to pick up some tincture of education. Many of the lives contained in the *Augustan History* were written by his desire. Before his own accession he had formed his opinion as to the qualities which a sovereign ought to possess. Nothing, he said, was so difficult as to be a good ruler, because the best and most cautious is often sold by his ministers. Of Aurelian his judgement was that he was an excellent general, but too

[1] See Seeck, *Untergang d. Antiken Welt*, i. 4. 438, following Eusebius; Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 17, gives November 20 as the day; the *Chronicon Paschale* has September 17. I have quoted the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* as the work of Lactantius. Brandt, the Viennese editor, still ascribes the treatise to a different author, but see on the other hand Harnack, Bardenhewer, Seeck.

cruel for an Emperor. In fact, Diocletian always rated the statesmanlike qualities far above those of the soldier. He was a competent officer, but hardly more. His ambition was to be the brain of the State, sitting in the centre, choosing his agents, and directing them where to strike. It is upon his administrative ability that his fame rests. He was experienced, wise, and even clement, for a son of the camp and a Roman despot.

How clemency was understood by Diocletian and his colleagues may be learned from the famous Price Edict issued in 301. In the preamble[1] the Emperors express their profound grief at learning that, though the immortal gods have granted them victory over all foreign enemies, a more deadly foe is still tearing the very entrails of the State. As 'parents of the human race' they feel it their duty to check the avarice of traders, who have raised the price of all commodities to an intolerable dearness, in spite of abundant supplies and bountiful harvests. Justice must strike these wicked men, who have created famine in the midst of plenty. Accordingly they proceed to fix the price of every article known to commerce. Bread, for instance, is to cost exactly so much. The baker who demands more, the consumer who pays more, the farmer who holds back his corn from market, are all to be put to death. Let no one think, the edict proceeds, that this is harsh measure, since it is easy to avoid punishment by obedience to the law.

Such was the political economy of these rude swordsmen, such their notion of the power of the master and of the duty of the subject. Another but less striking case in point is furnished by the edict against the Manicheans. This sect during the latter part of the third century had gradually stepped into the place of the older Gnosticism. It made its way into the West from Persia, hence its adherents were regarded with peculiar dislike as favourers of a hostile foreign power. The edict was of the fiercest. The teachers of the sect were to be burnt; their partisans

[1] *C. I. L.* iii. 2. 802.

to suffer death, confiscation, or labour in the mines.[1] Such was the imperial notion of religious toleration. Here again they would have said that the edict was not really harsh, because no one need be a Manichean, any more than he need pay too much for his bread. Only let him obey the law, and he would be quite safe.

The most important of the administrative changes introduced by Diocletian was the establishment of the tetrarchy. Very shortly after his own elevation he made his old brother-in-arms, Maximian, first Caesar and then Augustus. Six or seven years after, in 292 or 293, Constantius and Galerius were made sub-emperors, with the title of Caesars.[2]

All these men were Illyrian soldiers of fortune. Constantius alone had some pretensions to birth and breeding. He claimed, perhaps justly, to be great-nephew of the Emperor Claudius II, the conqueror of the Goths, was calm, enlightened, and humane, a capable general and a wise ruler. He was the senior Caesar, was attached to Maximian the junior Augustus, and in subordination to him ruled in the West. Maximian's special sphere of action was Italy, Africa, and Spain; the portion of Constantius was Britain and Gaul. Diocletian, the senior Augustus, took Galerius, the junior Caesar, as his lieutenant,[3] and these two governed all the provinces east of Italy. Diocletian chose for himself Asia and Egypt, the pleasanter and safer quarter, assigning to Galerius the region between the Danube and the Mediterranean. One important consequence of these arrange-

[1] See the text of the edict in *Codex Gregorianus*, ed. Hänel, xiv. 4. The date is extremely uncertain, the titulature and the name, Julianus, of the proconsul of Africa, to whom it was addressed, being wrong. It has been variously given as 287, 290, 296, or 308, but the arguments alleged in favour of this last date by Dr. Mason (*Persecution of Diocletian*) are far from convincing.

[2] The official names of the first tetrarchs were C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus; M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus; M. Flavius Valerius Constantius; C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus. I have called the fourth Galerius, though the ancient authorities never call him by this name alone, in order to distinguish him clearly from the elder Maximian.

[3] Duchesne thinks that Constantius did not become direct ruler of Spain till he succeeded to the dignity of Augustus; and this appears to be the meaning of Lactantius (*De Mort. Persec.* 8). On the other hand, Seeck (i. 454) holds that, even as Caesar, Constantius was responsible for Spain. See below, p. 476.

ments was that Rome ceased to be the capital of the empire. For some time past she had seen little of her master; the real centre of government had been the camp. Under the tetrarchy the imperial residences were fixed at Trèves or Arles in Gaul, at Milan or Aquileia in Italy, at Sirmium in Pannonia, and at Nicomedia in Asia. All, except the last, were chosen for strategic reasons.

The tetrarchy was possibly intended to be a permanent institution, the scheme being that the two Augusti should always abdicate on their *vicennalia*, that the two Caesars should then step into their places and appoint two new Caesars, and so on.[1] If this was really so, we are led to think that Diocletian was a political dreamer. No doubt he had two serious objects in view. It was evident that no one man could grapple with all the invasions and revolts in so vast an empire. There was plenty of work for four great military chiefs. But respect for the imperial person had wholly disappeared; and it was certain that any subordinate entrusted with the charge of a powerful army would seize the first opportunity to rebel against his master. Diocletian thought it the most prudent course to select for himself three adjutants, and to give each beforehand all that he could expect. Thus, if one of the four was murdered there would be three, or at least two, left to avenge him. From a military point of view the tetrarchy worked well. Order in the empire was restored and maintained. But Diocletian had reckoned with too little allowance for human nature. He took every precaution to ensure the good faith of his two colleagues, and even obliged the two Caesars to put away their wives and marry—the one, Constantius, Theodora, the step-daughter of Maximian, the other, Galerius, his own daughter Valeria. But he deliberately refused to admit the principle of hereditary

[1] See Mason and Seeck on this point. But it should be noticed that this view is inferential and does not rest upon direct testimony. Diocletian retained the supreme power in his own hands, and there was a definite rule of seniority—Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius, Galerius. Diocletian surnamed himself Jovius and his fellow Augustus Herculius, partly to mark his own precedence, partly to give an appearance of divine right to himself and his colleagues.

succession, and his ingenious paper constitution was immediately wrecked upon this rock. It so happened that Maximian and Constantius had sons. On the first election of new Caesars both these sons were passed over. Each refused to submit; each revolted, and was supported by his father's troops; and Constantine was the ablest man of his time.

All went well externally while Diocletian remained at the helm. He himself put down a dangerous rebellion in Egypt. In Gaul Maximian suppressed the peasant rebellion of the Bagaudae, and reduced to submission the five nations who were plundering Africa. Constantius drove the invading hosts of Alamanni, Burgundians, and Franks back across the Rhine, and recovered Britain, where the pirate Carausius had established a separate empire. Galerius gained an important victory over Persia, and kept good watch on the Danube. But suddenly the whole world was thrown into confusion by a renewal of the persecution of the Church, in 303.

Since the issue of the edict of Gallienus, for more than forty years, the Christians had been suffered to enjoy perfect security. They might well flatter themselves that they had received ample recognition from the State. They were no longer a new people, they could not be suspected of sympathy with the enemies of Rome, they were in no way responsible for the civil wars. The old accusations of monstrous immorality had long since disappeared, even that of incivism could no more be alleged. They had increased enormously. Diocletian's palace was full of Christians; even his wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria were regarded as well disposed towards the Church. There were numerous Christians in the army; many high officials were Christians, many others were friendly, or at any rate not hostile. Even among the tetrarchs Constantius could be reckoned upon as a benevolent neutral, while Diocletian himself, though capable of the most ruthless severity, disliked needless cruelty. One of the signs of the times was the great cathedral of Nicomedia, which was as conspicuous an ornament of the city as the imperial palace; it stood

upon an elevation, and could be seen from the palace windows.

Prognostics of the coming evil were not wholly wanting. In 295, at Teveste in Africa, in the domains of Maximian, a conscript named Maximilian refused to be enrolled on the ground that Christianity forbade the use of the sword. He was immediately executed. In 298 Marcellus, a centurion, quartered at Tangier, refused to take part in a banquet given to the soldiers on the Emperor's birthday, threw down his vine-staff, belt, and shield, and in a loud voice declared himself a Christian.[1] Cassianus, the court scribe or magistrate's clerk, refused to enter the sentence against Marcellus, dashing his pen and book on the ground. Both were executed.

A more significant incident was that of the sacrifice described by Lactantius.[2] When Diocletian was consulting the omens, on some State occasion, after repeated trials none of the expected indications could be discovered in the entrails of the victim. The chief of the *auspices* declared that the gods would not speak because certain Christian officials of the imperial household were present, and had made the sign of the Cross. Diocletian returned home in deep displeasure, ordered all his household to do sacrifice on pain of scourging, and sent round orders to all military commanders to dismiss from the service all soldiers who refused to worship the gods of the State. Whether Lactantius is right in affirming that a general order was given at this time for purging the army is perhaps doubtful. Eusebius[3] tells us that one general, named Veturius, turned out from his division all Christian soldiers, but seems to mean that this officer acted upon his own responsibility.

The affair of the abortive sacrifice would be regarded by the Emperor as a very serious matter. Diocletian was punctiliously devout; he regarded himself as the special

[1] The case was repeated by the governor to the Emperor and the Caesar. The Caesar must be Constantius, and here we may find a confirmation of Seeck's opinion that Constantius, as Caesar, governed Spain, to which Tingitana was annexed.

[2] *De Mort. Pers.* 10.

[3] See the *Chronicle* and *H. E.* viii. 4.

favourite and instrument of the gods; his sacrifice was a high State ceremony; and it would seem to him quite intolerable that any body of his subjects should stand between him and his heavenly patrons, and prevent him from learning the divine will. The following winter he spent at Nicomedia in company with Galerius, his Caesar and son-in-law. Galerius was a cruel bigot, and his mother, a half-civilized old savage named Romula, was another. She used to invite Christians to dinner-parties at which heathen ritual was ostentatiously practised, was furious when they declined her invitations on the ground that they were fasting, and reported them to her son.

According to Lactantius, Diocletian lent a reluctant ear to the fierce importunities of his Caesar. He knew well how the Church behaved when the faith was attacked, and wished merely to turn all Christians out of the palace and the army. Nevertheless, he yielded so far as to submit the question to a council of high civil and military officials. They advised that the Christians were enemies of the gods, and ought to be rooted out. Diocletian, still undecided, sent an aruspex to consult the oracle of Apollo at Miletus. The response of the god was exactly what might have been expected; Diocletian gave way and ordered a general persecution, with the proviso that there should be no bloodshed.

Maximian and Constantius were not present at the Nicomedian council, nor do they appear to have been consulted upon the subject at issue. Lactantius and Eusebius, contemporary and well-informed writers, both concur in laying the chief responsibility for the unhappy decision upon the shoulders of Galerius. It has seemed to many modern historians almost incredible that Diocletian should have deliberately set his hand to the work of persecution. Yet if he was wise and virtuous, so was Marcus Aurelius, of whom he was a professed admirer; if he knew and respected many Christians, and delayed long to take measures against them, the same is true of Severus and of Valerian; if he thought that the Church might reasonably be expected to conform on solemn occasions to the established religion, provided

that it was allowed generally to worship in its own way, this again may be said of Decius and of Valerian. Diocletian was a Roman autocrat, a serious and, in his way, a devout pagan, zealous for religious uniformity, and confident that it was quite an easy thing to enforce. It may be that he was afraid of Galerius, who commanded the powerful army of the Danube, and whom he knew to be violent and discontented. But he was the chief of the tetrarchy and must take his share of the guilt.

The day for taking action was fixed for February 23, 303. It was the festival of the Terminalia. Terminus was the stubborn old god whose special function it was to preserve all the ancient landmarks, and who would not yield up his own temple even to Jupiter Capitolinus.[1] The day was well chosen. At sunrise a troop of soldiers, accompanied by certain officials, marched to the great church, broke open the doors, seized the sacred books and burnt them, carried off all the furniture, and finally levelled the empty building to the ground. They had expected to find a statue of the Deity, and were surprised that there was no statue at all. Diocletian and Galerius watched the scene from the roof of the palace.

On the morning of the following day, February 24, the edict was posted up in the city. The exact text has not been transmitted to us, but Lactantius and Eusebius[2] have given us abstracts of the sense. There appear to have been four main clauses; the first ordered that all churches should be demolished, the second that the Holy Scriptures should be given up to the police and burnt, the third that all Christian persons of dignity should be degraded and rendered infamous, the fourth that all Christian slaves should be incapable of manumission.[3] The edict did not speak of death or torture. Diocletian hoped that it would

[1] See Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 324 sqq.

[2] *De Mort. Pers.* 13 and *H. E.* viii. 2.

[3] Clause 3 seems to mean that all *honestiores* should be reduced to the position of *humiliores*; they were further rendered *infames*; for the meaning of this term see Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, pp. 993 sqq. The *humiliores* are not mentioned in the edict; they had nothing to lose, and the magistrate could deal with them pretty much as he liked.

not be necessary to proceed to extremities, but in this he was speedily undeceived.

No sooner was the edict posted on the walls than it was torn down by a Christian, a man of high position. He was tortured, and finally burnt. A few days afterwards fire broke out in the palace. It was ascribed to the Christians, a rigid inquisition was held, and all the Christian domestics in the household were examined under torture. Nothing was discovered, but in a fortnight's time the palace was again on fire. This time it was regarded as certain that the Christians had laid a plot to destroy the Emperor and the Caesar together. Galerius took the road at once, in spite of the wintry weather, and hurried off to Sirmium, declaring that he had no wish to be burnt alive. Letters were dispatched to Maximian and Constantius in the West announcing the edict, and directing them to execute it with all severity, and Diocletian let loose his fury upon the unhappy Church of Nicomedia. Several of the chief Christian officials of the palace, Peter, Gorgonius, Dorotheus, and many others, were put to death after severe torture, others of lower degree were burnt or drowned in batches. Drowning appears throughout the persecution as a favourite mode of punishment; the intention was to deprive the victims of the rites of burial, and make it impossible for the Church to honour their relics. The whole population of the town was subjected to a rigorous inquisition. Sacrifice was universally enforced; no one could apply to a court of law for the recovery of a debt or the redress of any grievance without throwing incense upon the altar; refusal to do so entailed immediate and atrocious torture.

Some writers regard these horrors not as religious persecutions, but as punishments for a crime. But it is far from certain that there had been any crime at all. Diocletian was acting very much in the same way as Nero. There had been a fire. Some one must have kindled it; and who but the Christians? The carelessness of the palace cook is quite as likely to have been the cause as the despair of the Christians. And, even if some of the Christians were guilty, it may still be said that if there had been no edict they

would have given no trouble. The persecutor is as one who sets a stone rolling down a hill-side, and is responsible for all the mischief that follows. He can no longer control the results of his own fatal indiscretion.

Other disquieting events followed shortly after the fire. There were disturbances in Melitene, a strongly Christian region. There was an insurrection in an unnamed township in Phrygia. Troops were sent thither to restore order. Numbers of the inhabitants took refuge in their church; fire was applied to the building, and they all perished. Phrygia, also, was predominantly Christian. There was fear of hostile action by the kingdom of Armenia, where Christianity was already officially established, and there were risings in Syria.

How far these commotions and alarms may have been due to Christian intrigues we cannot say: probably they were mostly political. But Diocletian saw in them a proof of the necessity of making quicker work. Other edicts followed the first after a short interval; the second directed that all clergy of all grades should be thrown into prison; the third ordained that every mode of torture should be employed to force these prisoners to recant.[1] In the autumn of 303 a general pardon to all prisoners was proclaimed in view of Diocletian's *vicennalia*, which were to be celebrated in the autumn. But Christian prisoners were excepted from this amnesty unless they would do sacrifice, fresh tortures were employed to hasten their conversion, and those who obstinately refused to accept the proffered grace were put to death.[2]

Diocletian journeyed to Rome for this solemn festival. It was indeed a remarkable occasion. No Emperor since Antoninus Pius had worn the purple for twenty years, and considering the circumstances of the time, the duration of Diocletian's reign might well be regarded as little short of

[1] Eus. *H. E.* viii. 2. 5; 6. 8.

[2] The *vicennalia* of Diocletian began on November 20 (Lact. *op. cit.* 17), November 17 (Eus.), September 17 (*Chron. Paschale*). The amnesty was published some little time before. The exception of the Christian clergy from the amnesty is regarded by Dr. Mason as being in fact the third edict.

a miracle. But he was not beloved in Rome, for he had abandoned and degraded the city, and had even compelled her to pay taxes like any provincial town. The populace gave free play to their licentious wit, and the old Emperor, accustomed as he was to Oriental subservience, was so disgusted with their freedom that he left the capital on December 20, refusing to wait till January 1, when he was to have entered on his ninth consulate, and hurried back home in the depth of winter. On the road he was attacked by a grave disease. He reached Nicomedia more dead than alive in the end of the summer of 304, and was not again seen in public till March 1, 305, when he was so broken and altered by his long sickness that he could hardly be recognized. On the following May 1 he solemnly abdicated at Nicomedia. On the same day Maximian also resigned in the temple of Jupiter at Milan, Constantius and Galerius became Augusti, while Severus,[1] a debauched soldier, and Daia, a relative of Galerius, a young Illyrian savage who made himself as Roman as he could by taking the name of Maximinus,[2] were nominated Caesars. Severus was to rule Italy and Africa, to Maximin Syria and Egypt were assigned. Both Caesars were creatures of Galerius, who, as he had reserved for himself not only the Danubian provinces, but Asia Minor as far as Mt. Taurus, had under his control two of the great armies, and might well regard himself as master, though nominally Constantius was first of the new tetrarchy. Nevertheless he had made a great error. Severus and Maximin were both incapable, and could not help him. Again, in his rearrangement of the empire he had passed over not only his own illegitimate son Candidianus, who was a mere child of nine years, but Maxentius, son of Maximian, and Constantine, son of Constantius. The almost instantaneous result was civil war.

During the year 304 was issued the fourth and worst of the edicts, by which it was ordained that all men everywhere should be compelled to sacrifice. It was probably

[1] Lact. *D. M. P.* 18. Severus is generally called by this name alone, but appears on coins also as Flavius Valerius Severus.

[2] His full title is Galerius Valerius Maximinus.

the work of Galerius alone, for during nearly the whole of the year Diocletian was incapacitated by his sickness, which was mental as well as bodily. The first edict had prepared the way for it by its third clause which inflicted degradation and infamy on all Christian laymen, but personal compulsion had been applied to the clergy alone, except in so far as individual laymen may have been goaded into defiance, and so brought upon themselves the ordinary punishment of contumacy. If the fourth edict was ever published in the West, it would seem to have had little effect in that half of the empire, for Eusebius informs us that in the domains of Maximian and Constantius the persecution endured less than two years, that is to say that it did not last beyond the close of 304.[1] By that time the minds of the Western rulers were preoccupied by the need of preparing for great political changes, which shortly afterwards resulted in civil war.

We must distinguish, therefore, the history of the persecution before 305 and after that date. From 303 to 305 it was as wide as the empire; after 305 it was confined to the realms of Galerius and Maximin, who carried on the bloody work with ferocity till their deaths, the former till 311, the latter till 313. Even after this date there was something that could be called persecution in the East under Licinius.

As to the West our information is defective, and our knowledge, such as it is, depends largely upon martyrologies, always a defective, and usually a suspected, authority. Let us look first at the part played by Maximian.

Eusebius tells us that there was suffering in Mauretania and Africa, but gives no details. It appears that the first two clauses of the first edict were severely carried out. Maximian regarded the first not only as ordering the demolition of the churches, but as forbidding all assemblies for worship, and treated all assemblies for Christian worship, and all refusals to surrender up the Scriptures, as capital crimes. Most instructive is the narrative of the martyrs of Abitina. They numbered forty-nine, and their crimes were that they had met for worship in a private house—their

[1] *De Martyr. Pal.* 13.

church apparently having been destroyed—and that they had not surrendered their Scriptures. All eagerly confessed that they were Christians, but Anulinus, the proconsul, would not listen to this. It did not matter to him whether they were Christians or not, nor did he ask them to sacrifice; the questions were merely how they had dared to assemble, and what they had done with their Bibles. For these acts of defiance many of them were tortured, and all apparently put to death, among them several women and a little boy Hilarian. Diocletian had imagined, so at least it is said, that his first edict could be enforced without bloodshed; Maximian, with his brutal common sense, saw at once the impossibility of this. Bible-hunting in particular was carried out with great severity. Many of the magistrates were leniently disposed, or hated the work imposed upon them. These would have accepted any books that the clergy chose to surrender, and Mensurius of Carthage gave up to the police a number of heretical books instead of the Scriptures. But the Church of Africa was always fiery and uncompromising. Many of the clergy would avail themselves of no subterfuge. Those who allowed their Bibles to be seized were branded with the name of *traditores*, and were regarded as worse than apostates. How many perished in the same way as the martyrs of Abitina we do not know, but the number must have been considerable.[1] But, if we may trust the martyrologies, the fourth edict also appears to have been applied by Maximian to some extent.[2]

From Rome and Italy we have fewer martyrologies than from any region except Gaul and Britain. There were undoubtedly many sufferers, though the number was immensely exaggerated by tradition, and there were many also who fell away. Even the Pope Marcellinus[3] is said

[1] See the *Acta* of Saturninus, Dativus, and their companions in Ruinart; the story is told by a Donatist. See also the *Gesta apud Zenophilum* in Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* iv. 320, and the *Acta Sancti Felicis*, also in Ruinart.

[2] See for Africa the *Acts of Crispina* in Ruinart.

[3] For the story of Marcellinus see Duchesne, *Hist. Ancienne de l'Église*, ii. 92 sqq., and the article in *D. C. B.*

to have denied the faith, though he may have atoned for his weakness by a speedy repentance and subsequent martyrdom. His death on October 24, 304, was followed by a time of great disorder and alarm in the Roman Church. No successor was elected till June, 308, though acute persecution had ceased some few years before. The election of the next Pope, Marcellus, was followed by violent disputes and street riots among the Roman Christians, which were so fierce that Maxentius intervened, and sent Marcellus into exile. Eusebius, who was installed in his place, was confronted by an Antipope, Heraclius. Again the disorders broke out, and both Pope and Antipope were banished from the city. There was another long vacancy in the see till, in 311, a fresh bishop, Miltiades, was consecrated.

These obscure and violent dislocations in the history of the Roman Church testify to the severity of the persecution under Maximian, to the number of those who had failed in the cruel trial, and to the consequent recrudescence of the old penance dispute. What had happened at Carthage in the time of St. Cyprian was happening again at Rome, among the confessors in Palestine[1] and in Africa, where the fury evoked by the *traditores* was paving the way for the Donatist schism.

Constantius, the Caesar of Maximian, is said to have executed the edicts with great reluctance, and in the most perfunctory fashion. According to Lactantius,[2] he pulled down churches, but did no more. Eusebius says[3] that he did not even go so far as this. There may have been some few martyrs in Britain, the soldier Alban and two clerics, Aaron and Julius, of Caerleon, but the tradition is very doubtful.[4] In Gaul the Donatists themselves allowed that the sin of *traditio* had not occurred, but Genesius of Arles, Paulus of Narbonne, and Ferreolus of Vienne are said to

[1] Eus. *De Mart. Pal.* 12. Out of these disputes arose Meletianism.

[2] *De Mort. Pers.* 15. [3] *H. E.* viii. 13. 13.

[4] Harnack, *Mission*, p. 512, accepts the tradition as sound. But grave doubts are suggested by Haddan and Stubbs, i. 6; and Plummer, *Bede*, ii. 18, is also sceptical.

have died for the faith. In Spain there was severe persecution, directed mainly against the clergy. Saragossa boasted of eighteen martyrs, and there were many others, among them the virgin Encratis, who was cruelly tortured and mutilated, but survived, and a fierce little Spanish maiden, Eulalia, who suffered at Merida.[1] It is not quite certain that Spain was under the jurisdiction of Constantius while he was only Caesar, and he never personally visited the province. These cruelties may have been the work of Maximian, or of governors who in the Caesar's absence took it upon themselves to execute the law.

Of Constantius it may be said that he did as little harm as possible. Maximian was a brutish creature, but he was neither religious nor calculating, and these two defects were in the particular circumstances almost equivalent to virtues. As a persecutor he is not to be compared to his Eastern colleagues. At Nicomedia Diocletian raged like a wild beast after the fire in the palace, but in a year's time his sickness incapacitated him from further mischief, and the working of the persecution fell into the hands of Galerius and Maximin.

The resolute cruelty of Galerius is attested in general terms by the historians, and in detail by a number of martyrologies, especially as regards the Illyrian provinces.[2]

Far the worst of all the butchers was Maximin, who from 305 to 313 devastated the churches of Palestine and Egypt. In this case we have the inestimable advantage of a detailed account by the historian Eusebius, who saw with his own eyes what went on in both countries. It is strange that he himself survived to tell the tale, seeing that at Caesarea, where he dwelt, the persecution was particularly severe, that his beloved friend and master the learned and saintly Pamphilus and two of his fellow students, Apphianus and his brother Aedesius, suffered martyrdom. Yet his case is not peculiar. Of the forty-three Palestinian martyrs whom Eusebius names not one was a Palestinian bishop, though

[1] See the *περὶ στεφάνων* of Prudentius.

[2] On these documents see Harnack, *Chron.* ii. 463; Duchesne, *Hist. Ancienne de l'Église*, ii. 25 note; Mason, p. 175.

there were at least eighteen episcopal sees in the country. Agapius, Bishop of Caesarea, passed through the crisis unharmed. The only Palestinian bishop who gave his life for his faith was Asclepios, a Marcionite, but we may perhaps add Silvanus, priest of Gaza, afterwards consecrated bishop of the confessors in the mines of Phaeno. It seems clear that in Palestine the persecution struck like lightning in a very arbitrary way.

Bad as things were in Palestine, they were infinitely worse in Egypt. During part of the time the *praeses* of Lower Egypt is said to have been the notorious Hierocles.[1] At Alexandria and in the Thebaid the most outrageous cruelties were practised. Christian women were sent to brothels.[2] The most hideous forms of torture were freely employed; some were crucified head downwards. Men were executed in large batches, ten, twenty, sixty, even a hundred, including women and children, being killed at the same time.[3] Mutilations were common. From about 307 there were fewer executions, but the confessors were collected and sent off in large gangs to the porphyry quarries in the Thebaid, to the copper mines of Phaeno in Palestine, or the mines in Cilicia. Every one of these sufferers had been blinded of the right eye and lamed by cauterization of the sinews of the left leg. At Phaeno the Christian prisoners managed to build themselves some kind of a church, and keep alive their worship. Orders came down that this should be stopped; the prisoners were distributed among other convict settlements, and their leaders, two Egyptian bishops Nilus and Peleus, a layman Patermuthius, and another, were burnt alive. Another remarkable group, headed by Silvanus of Gaza, had acted in the same way. Thirty-nine of them were beheaded.

Maximin was not without a certain ingenuity and even ability. In 308, when there was a temporary surcease of

[1] Epiph. *Haer.* 68 gives the name Hierocles; the identification of this man with the Neoplatonist Hierocles is probable but not quite certain.

[2] *De Mart. Pal.* 5.

[3] Eus. *H. E.* viii. 9. He had himself witnessed the ghastly spectacles, and quotes an epistle of Phileas, the martyr bishop of Thmuis.

the persecution in the East,[1] he issued a new edict, ordering that the pagan temples should be repaired, that the fourth edict should be strictly enforced, and that all food offered for sale and all persons using the public baths should be sprinkled with sacrificial broth. If the Christian managed to slip through the net, at least he should be defiled and made to pay for the religion which he abhorred. About 311, when Galerius gave up the game as lost and issued his toleration edict, Maximin became more artful, or perhaps we may say discerned that merely negative measures of repression were not sufficient without some attempt to infuse new spirit into paganism. For this purpose he adopted the recent forgery of the *Acta Pilati*, and caused this abominable pamphlet to be learned by heart by all children in all schools,[2] caused the cities under his control to petition him that Christians might no longer be suffered to dwell within their borders,[3] and even took the extraordinary step of reorganizing paganism on the model of the Christian Church. He established a senior priest in every city, a high priest in every province. Their duties were to maintain daily sacrifice to the gods, and to act as inquisitors.[4] We are reminded of the similar attempt made by Julian. But Julian endeavoured to give his high priests a pastoral character, and to make them patterns to their flocks. Maximin had no moral object at all; indeed he was one of the most debauched of mankind.

[1] Perhaps owing to the changes in the political situation; it was shortly after the repulse of Galerius from Rome and the final rupture between Maxentius and his father.

[2] This blasphemous lampoon no longer exists. It is not to be confounded with the Christian forgeries of the same or similar names which will be found in Tischendorf's *Apocryphal Gospels*.

[3] See the copy of Maximin's reply to the petition of the Tyrians in Eus. *H. E.* ix. 7, and the inscription of Arycanda, in Gebhardt's *Acta Martyrum Selecta*, where we have a portion of the petition of the Lycians and Pamphylians and of Maximin's reply. Gebhardt dates the inscription about 312. But the emperors mentioned are Galerius, Maximin, Constantine, and Licinius. It must, therefore, have been engraved before the death of Galerius.

[4] Eus. *H. E.* ix. 4; Lact. *De Mort. Persec.* 36. From the early days of the empire there had been provincial high priests—the Asiarchs, Galatarchs, &c.—who presided at the provincial festivals; but these creatures of Maximin were a new institution, having some jurisdiction over inferior priests.

Towards the end the threats of Constantine, who, after his victory at the Mulvian Bridge, had discovered proofs of a secret alliance between Maxentius and Maximin, compelled the tyrant of the East to moderate, or at any rate dissemble, his rage against the Christians. Nevertheless he carried on his bloody work. Even in the last year of his life he put to death Lucian, the famous scholar of Antioch, Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, and Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia. Shortly after the promulgation of the Edict of Milan he issued a lying, hypocritical, and ambiguous proclamation,[1] which no Christian ventured to believe or act upon. Finally, after he had invaded Europe, been defeated by Licinius at the battle of Campus Serenus, and driven back into Asia, a few weeks before his death at Tarsus he gave up the game, and by a last edict[2] gave the Christians full permission to build churches and worship God as they pleased.

We may now retrace our steps, and take a brief survey of the political changes by which the last and worst of the persecutions was brought to a close.

On July 25, 306, Constantius died at York, in the midst of a campaign against the Picts and Caledonians. Immediately the assembled troops acclaimed as emperor his eldest son Constantine.[3] The event was at once notified to Galerius, who judged it best to accept the accomplished fact, and gave Constantine a place in the tetrarchy, not indeed as Augustus—this dignity fell to Severus—but as junior Caesar. Young as he was, he had borne arms with distinction in the East and on the Danube, was popular with the troops everywhere, and now found himself commander of the most warlike army in the empire, and master of Britain, Gaul, and Spain. Thus Galerius, Severus, Maximin, and Constantine formed the Third Tetrarchy.

Three months after the death of Constantius, on Oct. 27,

[1] Eus. *H. E.* ix. 9.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* ix. 10.

[3] The age of Constantine is uncertain. Bishop Wordsworth thinks that he was born in 274; see his article in *D. C. B.*, but this is probably too early. Seeck thinks that he was born February 27, 288; see his *Untergang der antiken Welt*, i. 47, 435; this may be a little too late, but is nearer the truth than the other computation.

306, Rome revolted, and set up Maxentius, the son of Maximian, as sovereign of Italy and Africa.[1] Galerius ordered Severus to march from Milan upon Rome. But the troops of Severus had served under Maximian and still retained a kindly feeling towards their old commander, who at this juncture emerged from his country retirement in Lucania, hastened to the assistance of his son, and re-assumed the purple. Severus was betrayed by his own soldiers, fell into the hands of his enemies, and was put to death. Upon this Galerius himself took the field, and endeavoured to form the siege of Rome. But his troops mutinied, and he was glad enough to effect a hasty retreat into Illyria without disaster. So threatening was the aspect of affairs that he saw no help but in appealing to the authority of his old master Diocletian. A conference was held at Carnuntum in Upper Pannonia, at which Diocletian persuaded or compelled Maximian to retire once more into private life, and concurred with Galerius in bestowing the vacant place of Severus on Licinius.[2] Thus was formed the Fourth Tetrarchy, Galerius, Licinius, Maximin, and Constantine. Maxentius was scornfully left out of the arrangement.[3] But Galerius must have been well aware that his new disposition did not correspond to the facts. The new tetrarchy existed only on paper; really there were five independent sovereigns, all jealous and even hostile. Such a state of affairs could not endure. Constantine in particular was quite beyond the reach of control. Maximian had visited him in Gaul to obtain his assistance against Galerius, had given him his daughter Fausta in marriage, and bestowed upon him the title of Augustus.[4]

[1] At first he bore the title of Caesar, Schiller, ii. 176 note, or of Princeps, Seeck, i. 482; after the victory over Severus he assumed that of Augustus.

[2] Valerius Licinianus Licinius.

[3] The date of the Conference of Carnuntum is not quite clear. Schiller, ii. 179, says November 11, 307. Clinton agrees, but from the authorities cited in the *Fasti Romani* it will be seen that there are many discrepancies among ancient writers. The editors of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. i, p. 168, are of opinion that Licinius did not become Augustus till August 29, 308.

[4] According to Lactantius Maximian visited Gaul three times, just before the attack of Galerius upon Rome; here comes the marriage of Fausta with

The next event of importance was the death of Galerius on May 5, 311. He died by inches of a lingering and horrible disease. In his agonies, finding no help from human skill or from the mercy of his gods, he bethought himself of imploring the prayers of the Church, and on April 30, 311, issued the Edict of Nicomedia. In this strange document he protested that he had persecuted the Christians only to bring them back to a better mind, lamented that through their wilfulness and folly his good intentions had failed, promised them toleration provided that they did nothing against discipline, and finally told them that in return for this clemency they ought to pray to 'their God' for his recovery and for the safety of the state.[1] Nothing was said about the restoration of the confiscated property of the Church. The edict was signed by Galerius, Constantine, and Licinius, but not by Maximin, who had for some time been on bad terms with Galerius and now saw Constantine, his own junior, openly designated as successor to Galerius, whose death was known to be imminent, and whose place as head of the tetrarchy he claimed for himself. In his penultimate proclamation[2] he had given himself the title of Jovius, a clear assertion of his right to be regarded as successor of Diocletian. Yet he did not dare absolutely to defy the edict. He would not publish it, but gave verbal instructions to his officers to relax the persecution, at the same time devising, as we have seen, new methods for defeating its purpose.

Shortly afterwards, we know not precisely on what provocation, Constantine attacked Maxentius, and after a rapid campaign, in which he displayed brilliant military ability

Constantine; again, just after the repulse of Galerius and the breach with his son Maxentius, he fled to Gaul for shelter, left it to attend the conference at Carnuntum, and, finding his hopes there defeated, returned to Gaul. All other authorities speak of one visit only, which *Paneg.* vii Constantin. places after Carnuntum; while *Paneg.* vi Maxim. et Const. c. 14, delivered at the marriage festival, places that event some time after the rupture with Maxentius. For the author, though he never names Maxentius, hints not obscurely that Maxentius was not the son of Maximian at all: 'filium tuum (Constantinum) qui te primus patrem fecit'; see for the explanation of these words Victor, *Epit.* xl. 13; *Anon. Valesii*, iv. 12.

[1] Lact. *De Mort. Persec.* 34; Eus. *H. E.* viii. 17. [2] Eus. *H. E.* ix. 9. 13.

and the most daring personal courage, defeated and slew his rival in the memorable battle of the Mulvian Bridge, on Oct. 28, 312. He entered Rome with the Christian banner, the sacred *Labarum*, displayed on high, and became master of all Italy and of Africa.

In the following winter Constantine and Licinius met together at Milan to cement alliance with one another, and arrange the affairs of the empire. Maximin was not invited, a tolerably clear indication of the fate that was hanging over his head. The peace of the empire was thought to have been secured by the marriage of Licinius to Constantia, the half-sister of Constantine; the peace of the Church was provided for by the Edict of Milan.[1] The edict begins by guaranteeing perfect freedom of conscience to all subjects of the empire whether Christian or pagan. It proceeds to annul all the hard restrictions which had been attached to the Nicomedian Edict of Galerius, and ended by restoring to the Christian society the churches and other lands and buildings of which they had been deprived. Compensation was promised to those individuals who might have purchased them in the interval. Private losses could not be made good, nor could the dead be called back to life. But as far as was possible the traces of the storm were obliterated. The only point in which the edict was not faithfully observed was the promise of full toleration to the heathen. Even by the end of Constantine's own reign it was infringed, and in the course of the next two centuries it was almost completely withdrawn.[2]

In the course of this same year, 313, died the aged Diocletian,[3] perhaps by suicide, perhaps by disease. We

[1] A Greek translation of the text is given by Eus. *H. E.* x. 5. In Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 48, will be found the Latin text as published at Nicomedia by Licinius on June 13, 313, shortly after the battle of Campus Serenus, and just before Maximin's death at Tarsus; see above, p. 488. Maximin had at last made up his mind to yield the religious point, but too late.

[2] It used to be supposed that there were three toleration edicts, that of Galerius in 311, one by Constantine and Licinius in 312, and finally the Edict of Milan in 313, but Dr. Mason argues convincingly that there were but two. See his *Persecution of Diocletian*, p. 327 sqq.

[3] Seeck postpones the date of his death to 316, *Untergang der antiken Welt*, i. 144, 497.

may think of him during the last few years as wandering alone with ever gloomier face through the magnificent halls and gardens of his sumptuous palace at Salonae. Things had gone wrong ever since his abdication. The tetrarchy, which he had set up largely in the hope that it would guarantee the safety of his old age, had fallen to pieces. He had received many omens that he was lingering too late upon the stage. Constantine, after the capture of Rome, had thrown down his statues, a sure mark of ill will, and in conjunction with Licinius had written to him a menacing letter from Milan. His wife Prisca seems to have left him, and had gone to live with her daughter Valeria, the empress of Galerius. After the death of Galerius these two noble and most unhappy ladies fell into the power of Maximin, who, in defiance of all morality, demanded the hand of Valeria, and on her refusal drove her and her mother into exile and penury, scornfully rejecting the prayers for mercy to which Diocletian found himself obliged to condescend. The unhappy old Emperor possibly lived to hear that his wife and daughter had been cruelly murdered at Thessalonica by Licinius, a ferocious brute, who exterminated, as far as he could, the whole families of his old colleagues, the wife, son, and daughter of Maximin, Candidianus the son of Galerius, and Severianus the son of Severus. It was high time for Diocletian to depart.

The compact between the two survivors of the tetrarchy was short-lived. In 314 Constantine attacked Licinius. The latter was defeated in two important battles at Cibalae (Oct. 8) and at Castra Iarba (Nov.), and was obliged to cede to the victor all his European possessions except a strip along the western shore of the Black Sea. A peace of eight years succeeded, but war again broke out in 323. On July 3 Licinius was defeated at Hadrianople and driven back into Asia. Constantine forced the passage of the Hellespont, and a decisive victory at Chrysopolis (Sept. 18, 324) left him sole master of the Roman world. Licinius fell into the conqueror's hands; his life was spared on the intercession of Constantia, and he was ordered to reside at Thessalonica. But he could not rest content, endeavoured

to seduce the Illyrian troops, and finally was put to death in 325.

Licinius had been converted so far as to recognize Constantine's God as a God of Hosts whose help it was well to secure before the trumpet sounded and the charge began. At the battle of Campus Serenus, in which he overthrew Maximin, he served out a prayer to his troops for use upon the field. He was ready to worship any deity who would give him victory. But before the war against Constantine broke out he was regarded by the Church as a persecutor. Eusebius[1] mixes charges of general tyrannical misgovernment with that of persecution. The truth appears to be that Licinius, who was always a pagan, knew that the Christians hated him, suspected that they were plotting against him in favour of his rival, and dealt harshly with them in self-defence. He sold all his Christian slaves, cashiered all Christian officers, and forbade bishops to leave their own dioceses or to attend synods at a time when the rulers of the Church were peculiarly anxious to meet in conference in order to regulate the disorders arising out of the recent persecution. At Amasia, in Pontus, churches were demolished, and several bishops cruelly put to death; we do not know exactly on what account, but their offence must have been indirectly, if not directly, connected with religion.[2] Certainly the Christians had reason enough for believing that Licinius was their enemy. Not until he was overthrown, and Constantine reigned alone over East and West, could the Church feel that they were secure. We can easily understand the paeans of rapture with which Eusebius salutes the first Christian Emperor.

[1] In the *Vita Constantini*.

[2] If we could trust two interesting documents, the *Testament*, and the *Martyrdom of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, he committed the incredible folly of ordering his troops to sacrifice to the gods under pain of death. Both documents are given by von Gebhardt. Harnack accepts the first as in the main historical, the second, which contains the mention of Licinius, he regards as later and untrustworthy; see *Chron.* ii. 479.

CHAPTER XXXVII

REVIEW OF THE THIRD CENTURY

By the battle of the Mulvian Bridge the victory of the Church was assured.

The causes of the victory have been variously estimated by Gibbon, by Renan, and by Harnack. All three estimates deserve close consideration, for they rest upon modes of philosophic thought which have many adherents at the present time. That of Dr. Harnack is by far the best; it is religious, and it is fortified by knowledge unsurpassed in range and precision. But we may venture to put the matter briefly, and say that the triumph of Christianity was rendered inevitable by the immense superiority of its theology and of its morality. As to theology, neither the old popular faiths nor the cults of Isis and Mithra, nor the metaphysical religion of the Neoplatonists, will bear comparison with the unsystematized creed of the New Testament. The belief in the Incarnation introduced an entirely new conception of the relations of God to the world, and of the spirit to the body, which secular philosophy has hardly appropriated even yet. As to morality, the Crucifixion of our Lord revolutionized the whole theory of ethics.

That the Christians were predominant in numbers at the accession of Constantine cannot be confidently affirmed. The evangelization of the empire was by no means complete, and very much remained to be done. But they were very strong, even in numbers, in every class of society, while in moral and intellectual weight the Church was irresistible. Some have regarded the conversion of Constantine, very unjustly, as merely politic. But it was certainly not impolitic. The great soldier emperor saw that Christianity was the winning cause, and the event amply justified his forecast.

We have observed, in passing, many signs of growing confidence and vigour, of stronger corporate life, and increasing sense of the nature, the unity, and the mission of the Church. Gnosticism had been cast out, and the attempt to blend alien and hostile principles with the Christian tradition had been stigmatized as heresy. Quartodecimanism had been suffered to exist, but a strong protest had been made by the West in favour of uniformity of ritual and against the obligation of the Mosaic Law, at any rate in one important particular. Montanism had been censured; the prophet had been ordered to confine himself within the limits of the creed and of discipline as interpreted by the bishop. A little later Novatianism had led the Church to insist upon the universality of God's forgiveness, to declare that she herself, in her militant state, was a mixed, and not a puritan, body, and that those who separated from her rather than admit this were schismatics, and therefore not Christians. In the third century we meet with debates of another kind. Unitarianism in its two shapes of Theodotianism and of Sabellianism was condemned, and it was emphatically declared that the Christian tradition taught a Trinity of Divine Persons. The Three Persons had been worshipped from the first; the difficult problem of their unity had been variously expressed, but in the West from the time of Tertullian the relation had been generally expressed in the phrase of Sameness of Nature. As to their full coequality, there existed, within certain narrow limits, differing shades of opinion. There was still discussion as to the relation of the Two Natures in Christ. It had been defined by Tertullian, as it was afterwards by the Council of Chalcedon. Paul of Samosata probably held much the same opinion as Nestorius, and was condemned.

These recurring disputes led to the convocation of many synods. We find mention of these deliberative assemblies first in the second century in connexion with Montanism and Quartodecimanism, and chiefly in the Eastern Church. In the third century we hear of them in Africa, at Rome, in Asia; they were occasioned by Novatianism, the rebaptismal controversy, and the teaching of Paul of Samo-

sata. We may distinguish two kinds of synod. The first was a general meeting of the local church court or parliament. In the district from which the *Didascalia* emanated it was held every Monday for the settlement of cases of discipline. By this body the bishop was elected. The laity were present, and had the right of expressing their opinion and tendering their advice, though the bishop, when there was one, was the supreme judge. The second was a large gathering of bishops convoked on the invitation of one or more of the senior prelates of the district. They formed a sort of chamber of peers, and decided questions involving matters of faith or rules of discipline. As a rule they appear to have been composed of bishops alone, but occasionally select members of the inferior clergy were present, and took an active part in deliberation and in decision; thus Malchion, who was a priest, wrote and signed the synodical letter announcing the condemnation of Paul of Samosata.[1]

A sign at once of the gradual elaboration of ceremonial, of the increasing wealth of the Church, and of the widening of her propaganda is to be found in the addition of new minor orders. In the second century we note the appearance of the reader, in the third we find the subdeacon, the acolyte, the exorcist, and the janitor.[2] Probably also the country bishop, or chorepiscopus, belongs to the same date. As to this officer, there is some difference of opinion. From the earliest notices[3] he would appear to have been a true bishop, but under the jurisdiction of the city bishop, and with limited powers, especially in respect of ordination. Whether he was a new creation, or whether he was a survival of the old village bishop who had gradually been pushed downwards and reduced to subjection by his more powerful and generally more intelligent brother of the large town, is matter of conjecture.

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 30. 2.

[2] See Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 11. The subdeacon is mentioned by Cyprian, *Ep.* 29 and elsewhere.

[3] Ancyra, Canon 13; Neocaesarea, Canon 14; Nicaea, Canon 8; cf. Basil, *Epp.* 53, 54, 142, 290, 291; see also article 'Chorepiscopus' in *D. C. A.*

By the end of the third century the clergy were sharply distinguished from the laity. Everything tended to produce this result. The theory of the episcopate remained just what it had been from the time when it was put upon paper by Ignatius; we may say what it had been from the first. The bishop wielded the whole power of the Church of which he was the representative. Nevertheless there was a vast difference between the chiefs of large and wealthy corporations, such as Cornelius, or Cyprian, or Demetrius, and the humble rulers of the simple isolated and despised communities of primitive times. The increase of wealth and the greater complexity in the admirable administration of the Church's charity made necessary a class of well-trained stewards, the inevitable development of theology called for professional divines, while constant and ever larger accessions of heathen converts threw upon the Church courts a multitude of problems in morality which could not be decided without some kind of casuistry. Again, as the Church widened her borders, the task of correspondence, upon which unity so largely depended, became heavier both in quantity and in quality. At the same time the mass of the laity must have been very ignorant, while the slaves and *humiliores*, who must have formed the great majority, were used to despotic rule and incapable of thinking or acting for themselves. A real franchise and some not inconsiderable degree of self-government existed in the Church, but hardly outside.

Two causes in particular tended to complete the severance between clergy and laity. Both are to be found in germ within our period. Neither was deliberately set to work, nor were their results at all foreseen. The first is the introduction of private confession, the second is that of the celibacy of the clergy.

The procedure of the primitive Church court is described in an interesting passage of the *Didascalia*.[1] The brethren were forbidden absolutely to have recourse to heathen tribunals. If there was a money dispute or a quarrel of

[1] Chap. xi: see Mrs. Gibson's English translation.

any kind between fellow Christians, it was brought before the assembly of the Church on Monday morning. There the plaintiff made his complaint, the defendant his reply, and the matter was decided by the bishop. Moral offences were treated in the same way. An accusation might be brought against a brother that 'he did not walk well in the way of the Lord'. If the bishop decided that the offence had been committed he would order the sinner to do penance and absent himself from communion until he had made public confession.[1] In some cases those whose consciences were burdened by grave, but secret, sins would voluntarily confess before the assembled brethren.[2] But there were manifest disadvantages connected with the primitive system which would make themselves seriously felt as the community grew larger and less like a family circle. In the public confession sins might be brought to light which implicated others besides the penitent, and sometimes were of such a nature as to bring both Christians and heathen within the danger of the criminal law. Again, wealthy persons shrank from the disgrace of public discipline, and the scrupulous might feel a doubt when it was necessary for the easing of their consciences to submit to open penance. Thus in the third century we find existing at Alexandria a custom of resorting privately to wise and experienced Christians for spiritual advice and direction. Traces of this practice are to be found in Clement, more express mention in Origen. It is improbable that either of these doctors means that such guides and confidants should always be a priest. Any person of attested devotion and intelligence might be consulted in this way, especially an ascetic. But naturally, in many cases, or in most, a clergyman would be preferred; and thus what proved to be the most formidable of hierarchic weapons was brought into existence by the act of the laity themselves.

The second was the celibacy of the clergy. Callistus allowed clergymen to marry, a permission which Hippolytus

[1] This was known as Exomologesis.
[2] See Irenaeus, i. 13. 5.

regarded as a proof of that Pope's criminal weakness.[1] Early in the fourth century the Council of Ancyra forbids the bishop or priest to marry after ordination, but allows the deacon to do so, if, before his ordination, he had declared his intention and received permission from his bishop. In the third century it was a debated question whether a priest who had married as a layman ought not to separate from his wife after ordination. Clement of Alexandria clearly thought that he ought not,[2] Origen as clearly thought that he ought.[3] The rule of separation was laid down at the Spanish Council of Elvira, and an attempt was made to enact it at Nicaea, but the Egyptian confessor Paphnutius protested, and the attempt failed. Nevertheless the tide was flowing strongly in this direction, and here again it was the laity who insisted upon the clergy becoming a caste apart.

For the celibacy of the clergy is but an incident in the general movement towards asceticism, that is to say towards complete abstinence from all earthly gratifications, in particular from wine, from the use of flesh meat, and from marriage.

It can hardly be said that our Lord Himself was an ascetic. He drank wine, ate flesh, attended a marriage feast, and spoke of marriage as a divine ordinance, and as constituting a union not to be broken. Nor did He lay down any rules of fasting. Voluntary poverty He did not treat as a general rule, though there were cases in which He commended it. So also there were those who might adopt the virgin life for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven, and there are passages[4] where He commends those who for the Name's sake 'forsake' or 'hate' even wife and child, referring probably to converts, who do not suffer even their dearest ones to hold them back from taking up the Cross.

St. Paul invests marriage with a high mystical and sacramental character, yet argues in favour of the single life. In other respects he leaves asceticism entirely to the judgement of the enlightened conscience, but with the

[1] *Phil.* ix. 12. [2] *Strom.* iii. 12. [3] *In Num. Hom.* xxiii. 3, Lomm. x. 280.
[4] Matthew xix. 29; Luke xiv. 26.

significant remark, 'neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse.' The author of the Apocalypse, in words that come upon us as a surprise, speaks of marriage as a defilement.[1]

About the end of the first century Hermas defines sin as any action accompanied by pleasure, or, at any rate, any action done for the sake of pleasure, and this grave exaggeration was largely entertained. Ignatius knew Christians who had formed a resolution of lifelong chastity and exhorts them to keep this renunciation a secret between themselves and their bishop. A little later we find Tatian and his encratites, who abjured flesh, wine, and marriage on the same grounds as many of the Gnostics.[2] But there were encratites who were quite orthodox. Some went so far as to refuse the use of wine even in the Eucharist, as, for instance, the martyr Pionius, and Cyprian found this practice so common in Africa that he wrote against it. Galen, as was noticed above,[3] praises the Christians because, ignorant as they were, many of them lived celibate lives just like philosophers. Many of the Pythagoreans and Platonists, for instance Apollonius of Tyana, were as ascetic as Christians, and for the same reason, from the belief, that is to say, that abstinence brought men nearer to God, and rendered them more capable of revelations and of miraculous powers. The belief grew that young women who married had chosen the lower estate, and fallen away more or less from their baptismal vow. Those of them who resolved to lead the celibate life are spoken of by Cyprian as a kind of clergy and as the flowers of the Church; special seats were assigned to them in the congregation, and the veil became their peculiar distinction. Pinytus, Bishop of Cnossus, in Crete, pressed upon his flock the universal obligation of celibacy, and was rebuked by the great Dionysius for binding upon men's shoulders a burden too heavy to be borne.[4] A little later Methodius and the pseudo-Clement write in rhapsodies of the glory of these professed virgins. As yet a breach of their resolution was lamented, but not

[1] xiv. 4.
[2] Clem. *Strom.* iii. 12. 82 sq.
[3] See page 245 above.
[4] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 23. 7.

punished; in the fourth century it appears as a canonical offence. In the native Syrian Church these sentiments were even more powerful than in the West. Professor Burkitt is of opinion that there the sacrament of baptism was not administered to either men or women unless it was certain that they meant to lead an ascetic life. Aphraates does not even mention a marriage service.[1]

Throughout this period the ascetic lived at home, known and honoured, but not forsaking his domestic and social obligations. But about the middle of the third century we recognize in Narcissus of Jerusalem the first hermit, or anchoret, who flies into solitary places to practise the contemplative life in solitude away from all distractions. Shortly afterwards we catch sight of Paul and Antony in Egypt, where the solitary life had been practised long before by devotees of Serapis and by Alexandrian Jews.[2] Paul was a hermit pure and simple. Antony was the founder of the coenobitic life in its earlier and undeveloped stage, not abbot of a monastery, but rather father of a village of hermits.[3] The history of the Fathers of the desert belongs rather to the succeeding period; here it is sufficient to observe that the germ of monasticism, as of many other features of the mediaeval Church, can be detected long before Nicene times.

We may consider here the treatment of slavery by the ancient Church. The Church found this institution existing, and forming one of the prime elements in the social and economical condition of the empire. She made no direct attempt to abolish it; it would indeed have been impossible for her to do so, and she was therefore obliged to content herself with preaching humanity to the master and good behaviour to the slave. It was a part of her belief that in Christ was neither bond nor free, that in the eye of God all her children were equal. Some eminent Christians were of servile condition or origin, as, for instance, Hermas the prophet, possibly Clement of Rome, possibly Pius, certainly

[1] Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 132 sqq.

[2] Conybeare's edition of Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*, pp. 264, 315, &c.

[3] See Butler, *Historia Lausiaca*, vol. i, p. 233.

Callistus; but there was a strong desire that the higher clergy should be men of good social standing. The martyr crown swept away all earthly distinctions, and Blandina, Felicitas, possibly Potamiaena, were not less venerated because they were slaves. But the prejudices of law and custom were exceedingly strong. Ignatius forbids masters to despise their slaves, but forbids the slave also to expect the Church to pay for his enfranchisement.[1] The marriage of the slave was possibly hallowed by the Church from very early times. Callistus, as has been noticed, gave ecclesiastical sanction even to the union of a slave husband with a woman of quality. As to slave baptism there would seem to have been a change of practice, the rule becoming more liberal as time went on. In the early third century the *Canons of Hippolytus*[2] direct that the slave of a pagan is not to be baptized without his owner's consent; if this consent cannot be obtained he is to be treated as a member of Christ's flock.[3] The somewhat later *Egyptian Church Order* directs that the slave of a Christian must obtain from his master a certificate of good character; the slave of a pagan needs no certificate, but must be exhorted to serve his master faithfully. The *Apostolical Canons*[4] lay down the rule that no slave can be ordained without the consent of his owner, nor unless he has been first manumitted, and this rule, though sometimes violated, remained in force. Under the Christian Emperors Leo the Great insists upon its observance.[5] But, again, the *Canons of Hippolytus*[6] order that the confessor, whose blood has been shed, shall be treated as a priest, even though he should be a slave.

As late as the Council of Elvira[7] it was necessary to forbid a Christian mistress deliberately to flog her handmaiden to death, and Constantine repeats the same prohibition, though such barbarity had been a crime by state law ever since the reign of Hadrian. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the rules of the Church were as generous

[1] *Ad Polyc.* 4. [2] Ed. Achelis, p. 76.
[3] Though he can hardly have been admitted to the Eucharist.
[4] 82 (81). [5] *Ep.* 3; see further *D. C. A.*, article 'Slavery'.
[6] Ed. Achelis, p. 68. [7] Canon 5.

towards the slave as those of the heathen *collegia* or those of the religion of Mithra.[1] The Church was too much afraid of giving offence. The angry vituperation which Hippolytus hurls at Callistus for his lenience in respect to slave marriages displays a singularly Erastian temper. The spirit of the Church was far better than the letter of her regulations, yet we cannot be surprised that the prejudices in favour of the immemorial institution of servitude were for centuries too strong to be overthrown.

As to the moral condition of the mass of Christians it is difficult to form a just estimate. The Gospel flung the moral ideal into a society that was by no means ideal. The Roman Empire was at best imperfectly and unequally civilized, a great part of its population was little above the state of barbarians, and it was mainly, though not exclusively, among the lower classes that the Church gathered her first adherents. The strain of the ethical demand must have been enormous. In this way we must explain one outbreak of fanaticism after another. Asceticism, Montanism, Novatianism, are all fiery protests against the weakness of nominal Christians, and if the clergy carried their authority too high the reason is the same; the laity in general had neither the will nor the character to take an effective part in the government of the community. Autocratic rule was as necessary in Church as in State. From time to time persecution purified and reinvigorated the Christian society. But as time went on ever greater masses of people pressed into the fold, bringing with them the air of the outside world. Even in Hermas we find a lamentable complaint of the state of the Roman Church. It was always difficult to keep Christians away from the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. In the third century signs of laxity increase. Cyprian regards the persecution of Decius as a wholesome chastisement for the low morality fostered by the thirty years of peace. Origen makes frequent protests against the behaviour of the congregations to which he preached. Paul of Samosata, bishop of the second see in

[1] See Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 281; Cumont, *Monuments relatifs au Culte de Mithra*, i, p. 276.

all the East, was an extremely worldly person, and he was not the only prelate of whom this might be said with truth.[1] We have observed the grievous allegations made by Gregory Thaumaturgus against many of the Pontic Christians.

These were new converts in a wild and unsettled district. But we possess a document of singular interest in the canons of the Spanish synod of Elvira,[2] which was held probably just before the outbreak of Diocletian's persecution.[3]

Spain was the most Romanized of the provinces. Whether St. Paul carried out his purpose of visiting the peninsula is uncertain. Clement of Rome appears to believe that he had done so. Anyhow, Christianity existed in the country before the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian.[4] But the early Spanish Church has no history except the letter above referred to, in which Cyprian speaks of two bishops who had recanted in the Decian persecution, and a few martyrdoms recorded by Prudentius belonging to the same date, until this synod of Elvira. Our next information is gathered from the Spanish Christian writers Orosius and Juvencus, from the story of Priscillian, and from the early life of Paulinus of Nola. By the end of the third century Christianity was established in every part of the country. Of the thirty-nine Churches represented at Elvira twenty-five belong to the province of Baetica, fourteen to the rest of Spain. Of the bishops who attended the most notable are Felix of Acci (Guadix), the president, Hosius of Cordova, the ecclesiastical adviser of Constantine, and Valerius of Saragossa, who seems to have died a martyr not long afterwards. Many Churches were represented by priests, but these, according to Hefele, though they sat among the bishops, did not vote.

In Spain, then, we see a flourishing, long-established, and intelligent Church, gathered together in a solemn and

[1] Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 6; *Ep.* 67; the Spanish Bishop Martialis.

[2] Illiberis or Illiberris; it was near Granada.

[3] The date has been very variously given. See Hefele, *History of the Church Councils*, where 305 or 306 is adopted. Duchesne would place the synod shortly before 303; and Harnack, *Mission*, p. 530, thinks this probable.

[4] Iren. i. 10; Tert. *Ad Iud.* 7.

numerous synod enacting a series of eighty-one canons, almost all dealing with matters of morality. What, we ask, was the state of things which the heads of the Church found existing about them? The answer is most startling. There was no clear line between Christians and heathen. Members of the Church were *flamines*, or priests, of the gods.[1] Offices of this kind were then hereditary, and could not be avoided. They bound their incumbent to offer certain sacrifices and exhibit certain shows; but Astius may, perhaps, have performed his duties by deputy. Christian women would lend their best dresses for their friends to wear in heathen pomps. Christians would attend at public sacrifices in the capitol of their town, and would give their daughters in marriage to heathen priests, or would burn wax tapers by daylight in the cemeteries, 'troubling thereby the spirits of the saints'.

Unchastity seems to have been alarmingly common, not only amongst the laity, but even amongst the clergy and professed virgins. There were even parents who would sell their own daughters to the *leno*.

After this it seems a venial offence that deacons, priests, and even bishops, embarked in trade, and travelled beyond the limits of their own provinces to attend fairs and markets, or lent out money upon interest, or that Spanish Christians served upon the *curia*, and even accepted office as *duumvirs*.[2] Or again that libellous pasquinades were sometimes nailed on the church door. But there were Christians who acted as *delators*, and there were Christian landowners who suffered their pagan farmers to pay fines or blackmail for them, and made allowance for the sums so expended when the rent was paid.[3]

The Spanish Christians were evidently too familiar with their heathen neighbours. They extended their easy-going

[1] In the *C. I. L.* Africa, no. 450, we find an epitaph on Astius Vindicianus who was 'vir clarissimus et flamen perpetuus'; the stone bears the Christian monogram.

[2] Cyprian had complained that the African clergy sought to make money by trading, and by the time of Diocletian many Christians were to be found among the town officials.

[3] This seems to be the explanation of Canon 40.

tolerance also to the Jews, who were numerous and influential in the country. The synod judged it necessary to forbid the faithful laity to invite Jews to bless their crops; they pronounced it an offence for a Christian to allow his daughter to marry a Jew, or even to eat with a Jew.

It need not be supposed that all these offences were rife in the Spanish Church. A list of sins even more infamous is to be found in the *Two Lives* of Barnabas, where the author is describing the world which the convert had renounced, the City of Destruction from which he had fled. But there is sufficient evidence to show that the Canons of Elvira are not meant as mere warnings. There were, no doubt, numbers of sincere believers in the Spanish Church, but there must also have been many of whom it could hardly be said whether they were Christian or pagan, or heretic or Jew. The bishops seem to have been most anxious to maintain good discipline; their judgements are of extreme severity, and many of the canons decree life-long excommunication. But we can clearly see what is meant by heathen taint, and how great was the necessity for priestly authority in the third century.

Something should be added on the unpleasing subject of superstition. This is a disease to which all religion, especially in its lower forms, is liable. If we read but little of it in the older classics the reason is that it seemed so natural that no one thought it worthy of notice. From the date of the empire we find frequent descriptions of the lowest credulity. They are sometimes jesting, sometimes serious, sometimes mere passing allusions, sometimes formal invectives, in Horace and the poets generally, in Petronius, in Artemidorus, Apuleius, Lucian. Even the philosophers, when they were not actually in the pulpit, more especially the Platonists, were capable of all the hallucinations of theurgy. In country places, and even in cities, the common people were hardly above the level of a negro kraal. Black magic, closely allied as it was to murder, adultery, rebellion, and poisoning, was forbidden by the Roman law, but many Emperors were believed to practise it in secret. White magic was highly esteemed.

The Church strongly denounced magic in all its shapes, and excommunicated any of her members who were found guilty of tampering with occult arts. We have seen how suspicious was the medium Alexander towards all Christians. Nevertheless, the Church believed that all demons were evil spirits, and had great powers for evil outside her own pale. If a Christian, by sin or infidelity, stepped beyond her magic ring, he came at once under the dominion of the devils, who could not only infuse bad thoughts, but inflict the most terrible bodily harm.

One subordinate feature of heathenism was the veneration of relics. The bodies of great heroes, Oedipus, Theseus, Alexander the Great, and others, were regarded as talismans protecting their towns against damage by plague or war. Orations were delivered at their tombs, and sometimes their remains were translated with solemn pomp from one resting-place to another.[1] The early Christian view is given in the Letter of the Church of Smyrna.[2] The body of Polycarp was burned by the authorities 'lest we should forsake the Crucified and begin to adore him'. Nevertheless the Church managed to collect the charred bones, and kept the martyr's birthday 'in memory of those who had fought a good fight in the past, and for the encouragement of those who should do so in time to come'. But this pious reserve was quite put aside in the Nicene age. About the same date the cult of the saints underwent a similar and equally sudden expansion. Origen held that as we may supplicate good men for spiritual help and intercession in this life, so—the Church in heaven and on earth being one—we may pray to them for the same kind of brotherly help even after their decease. But in the time of Prudentius or Sulpicius Severus or Paulinus it is no exaggeration to say that the saint has become a minor deity.

Other illustrations of the same tendency, to push a simple and not unnatural practice into a dangerous extreme, might be found in the church wakes instituted by Gregory Thaumaturgus, and in the painting of pictures upon the walls of

[1] See *D. C. A.*, s.v. Relics.

[2] Eus. *H. E.* iv. 15. 41 sq.

churches.[1] Gregory was deliberately attempting to attract heathen men to church, or, as people sometimes put it, 'to take the church to the people.'

The point at which there was most peril of superstition was naturally in the sacraments, but this great danger was as yet in the main avoided. There were those certainly in the fourth century, probably even in the third, who deferred baptism, partly in order to enjoy as long as possible the pleasures of the world, partly from a much more respectable reason, in order to fulfil as long as possible the duties of a citizen and a house father. As to the Eucharist we have noticed above that in the course of the third century a miraculous potency began to be attributed to the elements even by men so respectable for intelligence as Cyprian, Novatian, and Dionysius the Great.

But the question of superstition is by no means free from difficulty. The Christian pastor of the third century was very much in the same position as a modern missionary preaching to Hottentots or Patagonians. Their hearers are steeped in the moral ignorance and childish beliefs of barbarians, slaves to erratic passion, tossed about by unreasoning wonder, ready even to deify their guides and benefactors. Wherever such circumstances are reproduced there must always be a strong inducement to utilize the pre-existing religious ideas of the convert as far as possible, not to give too violent a shock, to practise what the Alexandrians called economy. Thus a compromise is made. A certain dash of superstition is allowed in the hope that, under wise and patient discipline, it will soon die off and leave the clear truth unalloyed. Unfortunately, it does not die off. The credulous and emotional majority become masters of the situation, and sweep their guides along with them. They do not reason themselves, and end by not allowing others to reason. The effect becomes very visible in the fourth and later centuries.

[1] See Elvira, Canon 36 'placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur'. What the canon forbids seems to be in particular portraits of Christ, for the words are not 'ne quod depingitur colatur', but 'ne quod colitur depingatur'.

But already in the third century devout men were troubled by the feeling that the Church was becoming too worldly, and were casting about for a remedy. Tertullian found it in increased moral vigour. It appeared clear to him that the free and simple morality of the Sermon on the Mount was not enough for the necessities of the time. A new revelation was wanted, and a new law, far more severe, more detailed, and more formal, was delivered by the Montanist prophets.

The Alexandrines set their hopes upon education, distinguished the intelligent Christian from the 'simpler brother', left the latter entirely in the hands of the clergy, but pleaded that the former should be allowed a certain sphere of liberty.

Others, following the same principles as Tertullian, but with much more respect for the authority of the clergy, divided Christendom into ascetics, or 'philosophers', as they were called, or 'religious', as they soon began to be called, and ordinary believers, of whom it was expected only that they should conform to the discipline of the Church, and do as they were told.

About theology there was little difficulty. Gnosticism dwindled away; it was too bizarre to be really formidable at any time, and Unitarianism found no large or eminent support. But the compromise with the world endured, and became more pronounced. It led eventually to the Reformation, which was in the main a protest, not against the theology, but against the superstition of the mediaeval Church.

But the question still remains, is indeed the cardinal question for our own age—Is a compromise necessary? How are we to reconcile freedom and law, intelligence and faith, reason and emotion? In what sense is the Church One and Holy, and even Apostolic?

Very various answers are given to this formidable problem in our educated and increasingly democratic time. Some look to the maintenance of the system of the mediaeval Church, framed as that system was in barbarous and autocratic times, some to the multiplication of sects each

emphasizing a limited aspect of Christianity, some to new theologies pproaching more or less to Unitarianism. Meanwhile, great masses, consisting not by any means wholly of the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious, are living apart from Christianity, and take little or no account of it in their view of the sum of things. Yet all men that are worth considering seem to desire that Christian morality should not be abandoned. Is this possible? Some again regard religion as a gift, like a genius for music or chemistry, necessary for the world, but not necessary for the individual, an oracle to be consulted in certain emergencies, not a light that lighteth every man. Is this possible?

What is the essence of Christianity? What is it that has enabled it to do so much, that has forbidden it to do so much more? We may take the answer to this question as it is given by one of the earliest of the Fathers, St. Clement of Rome. The Church are 'they which are called and sanctified by the will of God through Jesus Christ'. 'Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, and understand how precious it is unto His Father, because, being shed for our salvation, it was for the whole world the grace of repentance.' 'The sceptre of the majesty of God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the pomp of arrogance and pride, though He might have done so, but in lowliness of mind.' 'As God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Spirit, who are the hope and faith of the elect, so surely shall he, who with lowliness of mind and instant in gentleness, hath without regretfulness professed the ordinances and commandments that are given by God, be enrolled, and have a place among the number of them that are saved through Jesus Christ, through Whom is the glory unto Him for ever and ever. Amen.' Neither more nor less than this is the secret of the New Testament, as it appeared to an eminent Christian in the first age of the Church.

Beyond this all is speculation. The speculations of religious experts, on their own subject of religion, are naturally of considerable value, but still of secondary value. The finest speculator of ante-Nicene times was Origen, who

expressly warns us that his own ideas are not to be confounded with the Creed.

What, again, in the belief of St. Clement is the obstacle which prevents Christianity from gaining a perfect triumph? He calls it zeal or jealousy, by which he means vehement self-assertion. It is, in fact, human nature, which is older than either Christianity or Paganism, and at all times stubbornly resists any invasion of its ancient claims. Not necessarily the malignity of human nature, for even Decius and Valerian were not malignant, nor necessarily the stupidity of human nature, for Galen and Plotinus were not stupid. But sometimes its animalism, its lusts; sometimes its individualism, its covetousness; sometimes its inertia or hatred of change, even for the better; sometimes its one-sided experience, the philosopher, in his comfortable study or his secluded laboratory, forgetting his solidarity with the ignorant and suffering masses outside. Thus zeal or jealousy corrupts the Church, and weakens, though it cannot destroy, her energy, while it keeps the world in contented, or discontented, alienation.

Tertullian thought it a good omen of victory when he heard the men in the street saying, 'See how these Christians love one another.' Tertullian himself unhappily sowed harsh seed which did not conduce to peace and unity. But upon the whole the Creed remained simple, discipline was sensible and accepted, and the league of charity was unbroken throughout the ante-Nicene age. When the man in the street again talks as he did in Carthage in the beginning of the second century the Church will be ready for a new and even more arduous crusade in a democratic and scientific age. There is no enterprise too bold for those who faithfully carry the Cross of Christ.

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